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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WINDOWS OF MEANING IN ADULT E.S.L.

TEACHER MEANINGS IN A SPECIAL BASIC E.S.L. PROGRAM FOR ADULT IMMIGRANTS WITH LITTLE FORMAL EDUCATION

by

VIRGINIA L. SAUVE ©

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1991

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Windows of Meaning In Adult E.S.L.: Teacher Meanings in a Special Basic E.S.L. Program for Adult Immigrants with Little Formal Education" submitted by Virginia L. Sauvé in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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T.C. for William Pinar

William Pinar, External Examiner

September 30, 1991

A DEDICATION

In loving memory of my son

BEN SAUVE

who so enriched my life and that of my family's
with his wisdom, courage, creativity, compassion, and lively humor
in the seventeen years he was with us.
You are with me still, Ben.

and

To those many learners who came to Canada as immigrants
and, in their learning of the language, taught me so much,
especially, to my friend and colleague,
Azeb Zemariam,
whose dedication to social justice
is an inspiration to me.

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to reveal aspects of three of the foundational areas of meaning held by four E.S.L. teachers working with adult immigrant persons who have little formal education in their countries of origin. Through nightly dialogue journals over a ten week period, weekly conversations with the group as a whole, and periodic interviews, participants sought to identify and better understand how we understood the meaning of language, of teaching and of power relationships in our work, and how those understandings influence the lived curriculum of the adult E.S.L. classroom.

The program in which the study takes place is a special one in many ways. The learners were special needs individuals who were felt to be unable to benefit from a regular E.S.L. program due to a low level of literacy in their first language. The twenty-week program was designed as a participatory one in which learners' experiences became the ground upon which the emergent curriculum grew. Stories told by the learners in a variety of media including art, simple dramas, and photography became the way in which language, oral and written, was brought to their experiences.

The study opens with the premise that the curricular outcomes of an E.S.L. program are directly related to the understanding of language which precedes and flows through the curriculum. Four basic understandings are offered: language as form which gives rise to a traditional grammar-based curriculum, language as tool which produces the functional curriculum, language as a complex system involving self-esteem and human relationships which results in a communicative competence curriculum, and language as meaning-making which opens the possibility for a participatory curriculum which empowers the learners and leads to greater social justice in the society.

The study concludes that this is a useful framework for understanding the dynamics of an E.S.L. curriculum but goes beyond that in that we begin to see the difficulty for teachers in implementing a curriculum which is so fundamentally different in its assumptions and values. Our ability to make such a shift has less to do with what we do than with who we are.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am happy to have the opportunity to publicly acknowledge some of the many individuals who have both supported and encouraged me in this work and who have influenced it in some significant way.

First, I would like to thank Professor Ted Aoki who got me started in this program and who opened up a whole exciting new world of academic possibility for me. As my highschool social studies teacher for two years in Lethbridge back in the sixties, he impressed me with his intelligence, his humor and his drive. He made it interesting to learn. Much later, when I took my first graduate curriculum course in the early eighties, for the first time in institutional learning, I felt like it was legitimate to have my own mind. I felt free to truly question and explore. His incisive questions as my first advisor still ring within my head. He is in every sense of the word a mentor and I am truly fortunate to have had his guidance, his inspiration and his challenge in the early stages of my program.

Secondly, I owe a great deal to my committee, especially my co-supervisors, whose patience and wisdom have made it possible for me to finish what seemed at times impossible. To Professors Terry Carson and Gordon Macintosh, I express my sincere thanks. Terry did not give up on me in spite of the length of time it has taken to reach this point. Rather, he constantly shared with me many articles and books which helped me along the way and genuinely joined in my question, always reminding me of the need to maintain a reflective distance in order to see more clearly. I am especially grateful that he was willing to give me the space to make many needed decisions in my own way. It is a special talent to know when to be directive and when to allow freedom. Thank you Terry, for all of your support. Gordon has a gift for criticising in a way that leaves a person feeling still whole and able to make it better. I am grateful for his skillful editing and his confidence that I had something to say and would be able to say it. Gordon supervised my master's work in Educational Administration and because that experience was so positive, I had the courage to think that maybe I could do a Ph.D. Thank you, Gordon.

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I also thank Tracey Derwing who, although not involved throughout the process, was able to give me some last minute suggestions which have been most valuable and whose editorial eye was impressive. Thank you, Tracey.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C.E.C.	Canada Employment Center
C.E.I.C.	Canada Employment and Immigration Commission
E.S.L.	English as a second language
E.W.P.	English in the workplace
S.N.	Special needs program* (a fictitious name)
T.E.S.L.	Teaching of English as a second language
T.E.S.O.L.	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (the international T.E.S.L. organization)
W.C.C.C.	Western Canada Community College* (a fictitious name)

Chapter 1

COMING TO THE QUESTION

Introduction

What does it mean to teach English as a second language to adult immigrants in Canada when those persons have very little formal education in their countries of origin? Such a question of meaning could be asked of many interest groups including the learners themselves, the governments which fund the programs, or the public whose tax dollars ultimately support them. This study, however, seeks to enable us to understand how a small group of teachers themselves understand the nature of the work they do in a special program called the Special Needs (S.N.) Program. These understandings are revealed by the words they use to talk about their work, primarily in written journals.

In that this question is very broad in its scope, and, in that the particular program in which the study was done was a somewhat unique one, the question has been limited to three areas of inquiry: the meanings of language, of teaching, and of power as they appear in this context.

Two fundamental beliefs precede this work. One is that the *discerning* of meaning cannot be separated from the *making* of meaning, that even as we question our understandings, those understandings are changed by the questioning itself. The other is the related understanding that, in this kind of research, the primary researcher is not only to discover what "is" but also to facilitate the other research participants in becoming more aware of the changing meanings and possibilities inherent to the questioning process. In this growing awareness, all participants are then called to account for the value we place on our understandings and our work as we seek to do it better.

The research tools chosen for the study are simple but emancipatory tools which, when engaged with sincerity and trust, can enable their users to see beneath the surface of the taken-for-granted to the assumptions, values and myths which lay thereunder. The stories, the journals, and the conversations are woven strands of a rhythmic questioning and explaining, re-questioning and re-explaining wherein, as participants, we come to a new awareness of our "personal knowledge", knowledge which enables more authentic choice in curricular practice.

In that the study includes descriptions both personal and controversial, the decision was made to change the names both of the institution and of the individual teachers who participated. The program is referred to as the Special Needs Program (hereafter called the S.N. Program). It was designed to better the learning opportunities for those learners who had limited literacy skills and could not, therefore, make effective use of the regular E.S.L. program which was highly dependent on printed materials of various kinds. The four co-researchers from the Western Canada Community College included three teachers (two female and one male) and one administrator who also taught in the program whenever she had the opportunity. I knew three of these persons quite well, especially the administrator as she and I had developed this program two years earlier when both of us were teachers at the College.

In later chapters of this writing, I have used the metaphor of journey to describe my experiences in adult E.S.L. Specifically, I refer to the train as a vehicle, perhaps because my memories of train travel consist of many colorful scenes from the panorama of Canada as it unfolded before me and remained like snapshots in my mind. Train travel is different from driving the car or from flying. The windows in a train are larger and one has nothing to do but sit and look. Having crossed Canada back and forth twice, once in winter and once in summer, there are, in my mind, perfectly framed pictures of children skating on the lakes of the Canadian Shield and of golden wheat fields waving lazily in the heat of summer. These and many others are the backdrop of my vision of Canada. When I hear the word 'Manitoba', those are two of the scenes which give substance to my lived meaning of that name. Similarly, my experiences with E.S.L. learners are like that. Not only are there visual etchings in my mind but there are feelings and emotions which arise when triggered by discussion or reflection. In that a dissertation is a public document, I cannot write without considering the experience of the one who is reading. Autobiographical reflection has been a part of me since I was a child and kept a nightly journal which I reread and thought about many times. The small stories in this section are selected snapshots from my album of memories in this work as an E.S.L. teacher. I share a few of them with you at this time so that you may have a sense of the tone with which I approach the research process in the following chapters.

I. Autobiographical Reflections

"We cannot have experience without asking questions."
(Gadamer, 1984, p. 325)

No research project emerges from a vacuum. This project was born of many years of both frustration and excitement in my own teaching of adult immigrant learners, as I struggled to be present to their efforts to find a meaningful place in this society. As both a teacher and a teacher educator, I have come to see that there are many contradictions between our ideas and theories about teaching and our actual experience of teaching. The boundaries between the world of classroom and the "real world" are broken down as I have come to know various immigrants as persons and as friends. I hear their stories and their questions and I am called to be accountable. I am called to question those givens I had not questioned before. We are teachers of language but what is language and is that the only relevant learning needed by the immigrant learner? We are teachers but what is a teacher in this context? We teach immigrant learners but for what? What does it mean to be an immigrant in this society? As I have come to know each learner as a precious person, I am awed by the responsibility I feel in the presence of each one. How can I, in any given moment, be the face of Canada in welcoming the immigrant newcomer?

These questions have arisen from the broader context of my years of experience with immigrant learners. In 1968, I taught my first class of adult immigrant learners, a group of mostly well-educated Europeans who came four nights a week, tired but determined to find their way out of what they saw as dismal jobs as dishwashers, janitors, and laborers. One of these women could not accept the degrading status of the immigrant in Canada and returned to Germany where she has resumed her career as a teacher in special education. Another shared with me her family's decision to leave Czechoslovakia when the Soviet tanks came rolling in. After years of bleeding hands as a dishwasher, she had learned enough language to get a job doing what she had done in her country, as a bookkeeper with the Government of Canada. Now two years short of retirement, she still calls me for special family events and I appreciate that link with my beginnings in the E.S.L. classroom. At the time of teaching this class, I did not know enough to question much, other than to wonder why there was no curriculum and there were no texts. "Just teach them," I was told. So, I did.

I taught night classes in a couple of institutions and remember one happy man who taught high school during the day and adults at night. I asked him how he could handle the load and he replied, "The day job is work. This job is a real high for me." Those who heard him laughed and nodded; we all understood exactly what he meant. That is how we felt about it, too. I wondered what it was that gave him this sense of joy and accomplishment that he was not able to find in his day job.

In 1976, I began my job with the Western Canada Community College. The E.S.L. classes at the College were funded by Canada Employment and Immigration and were the right of every newly-arrived immigrant who needed English language skills in order to work in "suitable" employment. (Unfortunately, many immigrants are not aware of their rights nor would they necessarily accept their counsellor's definition of "suitable".) The students who came to the College for their five months of "full-time" (four and one quarter hours per day) English classes tended to come in waves, according to what was happening in the world. In 1976, we taught large numbers of Chileans fleeing Pinochet's regime. The classes were lively with song, humor and interesting debates, all of which appealed to these learners.

Then, in 1978, the Vietnamese and Vietnamese Chinese refugees began to fill our classes. Compared to the Latin Americans and Europeans we had had, they seemed quiet, mysterious and serious students many of whom, like many of the Chileans, had experienced torture, rape and other brutality before they were able to reach the safe haven of Canada. When a few occasionally lost normal consciousness and began to re-live the horror of their experiences before our bewildered eyes, we felt helpless and lost in knowing how to respond to them. At that time, there were almost no community resources to help them or us to cope with such problems and I felt claimed by the pain of their lives. I found myself going to court with students, co-signing loans for airfares for relatives, rounding up cash to pay for dental work for which the government would not pay, and welcoming husbands and children to my door when they came for help not knowing where else to turn.

Two students committed suicide during my time there and, in both cases, I felt, not the anguish I would have expected to feel but rather, the resigned acceptance of one who saw their decision as sad but logical given their situations. It was in such circumstances that I began to question the relevance of the theory behind E.S.L. instruction. If the professional journals were the definitive guideline to the boundaries of my profession, then I would have been obliged to think of what I was doing as a primarily linguistic enterprise. I sleepily rejected articles on research into teaching bilabials to Vietnamese learners and began to shift my attention from the traditionally understood "what" of the common ground between teacher and learner to the "who" participating in that communication.

The most striking memory of this frustrating time revolves around the presence of large numbers of people who were illiterate or semi-literate in their first language. I had never before been confronted with such a phenomenon. These were fishermen and fishmongers who sat dutifully, blankly and helplessly in our midst, incapable of understanding either me or the other students, incapable of coping with texts, workbooks, handouts and schedules which would have them move from one classroom to another for different classes. They could not conceptualize what existed in English but not in their own languages. The teachers called them slow learners or terminal zeros and they were forced to repeat the same class twice as they had not learned enough to advance to the next level after ten weeks. Most teachers hated to teach that level. I began to feel like the slow learner and knew that there must be a better way to respond to their presence than to expect them to learn in the same manner that a formally educated learner could.

About six years into my stay at the College, I began to recognize two myths under which we had been operating, namely, that English was the golden key to doing the work the learners had done in their own countries, and, that there was employment for them in society. When students came back to visit, I began to notice that some who had done very well with their English were still cleaning toilets although they may have been teachers or other professionals in their own countries. Countless others had not found permanent work at all and were severely depressed about having to live on handouts and waste time when they really wanted to contribute to this society. Some of those were skilled equipment operators and medical personnel. Questions of social justice began to haunt me in the classroom.

Then, I had the very pleasant experience of going into various workplaces to teach English in the Workplace (E.W.P.) This was much more satisfying to me in several ways because I was dealing with people who had employment and were, therefore, not preoccupied with wondering if they would find a job at the end of the course. They wanted to learn the language to work more effectively and also to get along with greater ease in their daily lives outside of work. As a group, they often had a lot in common in both their everyday tasks and in their lives. Daily work problems became the curriculum and results were readily perceived by the learners who were then encouraged to learn even more. Co-workers who had never spoken to each other and may even have seen themselves in competition (as in doing piecework in a factory) were now laughing and drinking tea together or getting together on the weekend for dim-sum. I began to see the difference a feeling of community could make not only in the classroom but also in people's lives in Canada.

In September of 1981, I took a year's leave to complete a master's degree in educational administration for which I prepared a handbook for teaching English in the Workplace

(E.W.P.). To fund that year off, I accepted a research contract with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (C.E.I.C.) to study six E.W.P. projects in Alberta and Ontario. The most striking result of that research was the finding that higher self-esteem on the part of the workers was seen by the managers as the single most valuable result of doing E.W.P. (Not three years earlier, I had noted a similar finding in evaluating the program I had taught and was told by my manager that, although that was interesting, it was not really significant and I was not to list it in the results.) In that the respondents in this study had not been asked this question directly but had volunteered the information spontaneously, I knew that there was something very important here that I wanted to learn more about. In my mind, this finding questioned the primacy of technique and of language as tool, and led me to wonder about the possibly more meaningful primacy of personhood, and of language as meaning-making.

Because no one else had done research into E.W.P. in Canada, I suddenly found myself a popular figure at conferences across the country and began to increase the amount of professional development work I was doing for other teachers. In taking on this new role, I found that the most valuable way for me to communicate my insights and questions in a meaningful way was to tell my own stories and to ask my questions, which then elicited the stories and questioning of others. I asked people to dig deeply into their own experiences, to name them, and, in the naming, to come to see their work in new ways, ways which opened up new possibilities for what we ought to be doing and how.

The highlight of this period of my growth was a weekend workshop I did for a group of Calgary teachers in the late winter of 1984. I had taken two courses in curriculum theory, both of which I was eager to apply to my own field of work. In the course taught by Tetsuo Aoki, I had learned the potency of distinguishing between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experience. In the course taught by Madeleine Grumet, we had done extensive work with our own stories, work from which we were able to unearth many of the hidden assumptions in our own learning and teaching experiences. I decided to use a format similar to hers for the workshop. This meant taking the risk of letting the curriculum of the workshop emerge from the stories of those present and trusting that meaningful learning would come out of that. Each teacher had been asked to register by submitting four stories, each concerning their experience of an E.S.L. student or students they had taught. I had long distance calls asking what I meant by "story" and by "your experience of". I did not want to narrow the possibilities of the exercise by giving them my interpretations and I was curious to see what they would come up with so I told them to interpret the assignment as they wished; there was no right or wrong way to do it.

The stories were mailed to me four days before the workshop. I had forty-eight stories before me and I read with awe and amazement the treasure which unfolded with each page. I had heard someone say that a story always told more about the author than about the events of the story itself. One participant had written "objective" data about four students in tiny handwriting which covered half a page for each "story". Neither she nor her experience were indicated directly in what she had written. Another wrote flowing four to ten-page stories that could easily have been published and sold, so fascinating were they. As I read, three groups appeared to take shape, according to the degree of personal involvement with students which teachers had indicated in their stories. I decided to group the teachers in the workshop so that each group of three or four would have at least one representative from each category. One half hour after we had begun to work with the stories, someone asked if I had grouped them in the way I had for a particular reason. She had noticed how differently the members of her group had approached the task.

This workshop was a very powerful learning experience for me, as others said it had been for them. People were excited when others saw themes and metaphors in their stories which they had not been able to see themselves. Whereas each person appeared to have some theme uniting all four stories, it always took the group to find it. Then, as we worked further, we began to see broader themes arising from the collectivity of our stories. The themes as I later wrote them up were as follows:

1. notions of education and curriculum
2. notions of language, overt and covert
3. lifeworld of the learner
4. lifeworld of the teacher
5. the "good" learner and the "poor" learner
6. roles of the teacher

Within each of these areas, there arose questions, questions that most of the teachers had not previously paused to ponder. There was a strong thread throughout all of the stories of conflict between what a teacher felt he or she "should" do or believe as a *teacher* and what she or he felt called to do or believe as a *person.* When twelve teachers see a conflict between the role of a teacher and the experience of being a person, I have a lot of questions about the meaning of teaching. A teacher is, after all, a person. Is our teaching lived in the name of the personhood of our students and ourselves or does it actually manifest itself in forms which mitigate against such experiences of personhood? This workshop and the questions which arose for me as a result were the beginnings of the need to do this dissertation research. Something seemed very wrong in the inner conflicts we experience as E.S.L. teachers. I wanted to understand better what it was that allowed us to continue living with this ongoing struggle within.

Two years before beginning the doctoral program, the woman referred to as Ann in this writing and myself were given permission to develop the Special Needs Program for those students who had not been seen to learn in the regular stream. Most had limited formal education; some had experienced traumatic incidents and found it hard to concentrate. Others were in a kind of shock at the experience of differentness of everything around them in this new country. We asked for and got a good deal of freedom in reconceptualizing what we needed to be doing with these learners. We followed our intuition, for the most part, in a way that the average classroom teacher is seldom allowed to do. We established new parameters: classrooms used only by these students as opposed to the norm of shared classrooms, extended study hours, a flexible timetable, one teacher staying all day with one group rather than another teacher coming in, aides and volunteers to help as needed, introduction of artistic activities, a half day off for students to do their banking and attend other appointments, and one half hour off our teaching assignment each week towards an extra staff meeting for those teaching in the Special Needs Program. We noticed that more learning seemed to happen in the daily "tea party" than at any other time of the day and we sought to understand why.

One line of questioning which came out of our efforts in this program concerned the fact that, although we as teachers could now see significant progress in the students, it did not show up to the degree that the two administrators responsible for the program would have liked on the standardized grammar and oral tests given to all the students at the end of the twenty weeks. The tests presumed a level of literacy, conceptual development, and intercultural awareness development which there was no way of these students developing in such a short time. The tests did not indicate the students' newly acquired openness to formal learning, nor their newly developed skills for being accountable for their learning in this context, nor the elementary verbal and literacy skills which they had attained.

Before the Special Needs Program began, I had assumed that E.S.L. programs existed for the benefit of the students. In the face of a bleak job market, a time limit on their studies which did not recognize their special needs, and, the frequent receipt of the label of "failure" by their employment counsellors, I began to wonder in whose interests the E.S.L. programs really existed, since they were obviously not meeting the needs of these students to learn the language and cultural skills they would need to gain employment in this society.

There is one other strand needed to complete this process of coming to the question and that strand is to be found in the person of a man I met while teaching briefly in a prison. He is the son of Lebanese immigrants to this country. This man, from the age of twelve onwards, grew up on the streets of Canadian society with none of the advantages I had experienced. His education was acquired by survival, his literacy by sheer will to know what was going on around him. His creative intelligence and highly critical view of the institutions of our society assisted me greatly in beginning to overcome the blindness into which I had been conditioned not to see the injustices around me. Knowing him helped me to form the question in my mind, "What does it mean to be human?", a question which supersedes, for me, any question of what it means to belong to this or that culture. It is the question of what it means to be human which forms perhaps the most basic horizon of this study, for, in Canada, we have an opportunity not to be found in many parts of the world to creatively explore what it means to be a society into which many different cultures come together. Does our teaching of E.S.L. to adult immigrants serve such creative explorations of society or does it serve to ensure that incoming cultures are essentially swallowed up by the society into which they come?

II. Research Stance

The question of what it means to teach E.S.L. to the adult immigrant in Canada can be asked from many perspectives. In this study the question is asked from the perspective only of the teacher, to be specific, of four teachers and myself in one very special program. The Special Needs Program was designed by two teachers, including myself, from a critical perspective in education. Both Ann and I had been taking courses in critical theory and reconceptualist curriculum theory and both of us saw the relevance of these ideas in designing a program to better serve the interests of a group of learners who had, up to that point, been unlikely to derive much value from the existing programs.

The primary data-gathering phase of the study was limited to one ten-week intake, that being the time that one teacher worked with one group of students each of whom had a total of twenty weeks in the program. To have asked more of the co-researchers in the project would have been unreasonable in view of the time commitment and the amount of energy exacted during the data-gathering phase.

Lastly, it is important to underline the value stance which underlies this dissertation project. Freire speaks of man's ontological vocation, a term which nicely summarizes the belief that all persons have the right and the ability to be subjects in their world, not objects. I believe that immigrant learners deserve to be more than recipients of a readymade culture and that teachers deserve to be more than delivery agents of a readymade curriculum. To be either is, in my view, to be less than fully human. The search for meaning is a journey in being and becoming more human.

III. Horizons of the Question

> "All interpretation places the interpreter in medias res and never at the beginning or the end. We suddenly arrive, as it were, in the middle of a conversation which has already begun and in which we try to orient ourselves in order to be able to contribute to it." (Ricoeur, 1982, p. 108)

I like the notion of horizon because a horizon is that which enables us to know where we are, to orient ourselves in space and yet, a horizon is not fixed; it changes with the journey we are on. I began this study with one set of horizons but, as I worked with the participants, quickly realized that my orientation was not shared by all of them and I needed to rename the horizons in such a way that they would serve to orient everyone and not just myself.

Gadamer (1984) talks about the hermeneutic priority of the question (p. 325). This notion was very helpful to me in focussing my attention in a particular direction but I found the direction so broad that my journey could not encompass all that I found along the way, thus the need to establish clearly identifiable horizons which would enable me to discern that which I needed to do now from that which would have to await other adventures in research. In exploring my original question of meaning, I identified over one hundred questions which fit well within that broader one and, from those, I chose initially five areas of inquiry: language, the immigrant presence in Canada, teaching, the community of teachers, and meaning-making, all of which I personally found relevant and important in my questioning. Each of these was then framed in the form of a question or questions as follows:

1. What is the understanding of language which appears to ground our teaching of English as a second language?

2. In our expressions of personal experience, what beliefs are indicated about what it means to be an adult, non-English-speaking immigrant in Canada?

3. On the basis of our rememberings, what does it appear that we believe the activity of teaching is in this context?

4. What is it that we share as common meanings in our work as E.S.L. teachers? How do we account for these common meanings? How do we account for our differences?

5. In our journey as individuals and as a community, to understand more deeply the nature of our work as E.S.L. teachers, in what ways does the process of searching for meaning appear to transform (or maintain) the meanings we attach to our work?

Within two weeks of working with the teachers, it became apparent that they could relate to some of my questions but not to others. Questions concerning the role of the immigrant in Canadian society were met with blank looks and statements of non-comprehension. What was a meaningful line of inquiry for me was bewildering to the others. The question of community meanings as opposed to individual meanings became unnecessary as we saw how similar our experiences, our meanings and our views were, for the most part, once those were articulated. The last question was real for me but immaterial for the others as they were concerned with the immediacy of their work and how to do it better, so I left that for my own reflections and have addressed that at the end of this dissertation.

One other horizon appeared and reappeared until we accepted its assertion into our questioning process and that was the question of power. Whereas there was a very conscious attending to empowerment as a primary intent in the curriculum of this program in recognition of the fact that these learners, because of their many handicaps in this society were the least likely to have power over their own experience of life here, what had not been recognized was the energy lost by the teachers in dealing with the power struggles within the organization in which they worked. That was a primary point of attention for the administrator in the research and she, in fact, resigned shortly after the research had been completed. However, it was a struggle also for the other teachers, in spite of Ann's efforts to minimize it for them, and we could not help but question the relationship between the intent of power for the learners and the experience of relative powerlessness for the teachers.

As we worked together, our refocussed horizons became questions of the meaning of language, teaching and power as they were experienced in the daily lives of the E.S.L. teacher. They were as follows:

1. What is the meaning of language in our teaching of English as a second

language?

2. What is the meaning of teaching in our teaching of English as a second language?

3. What is the nature of the power relationships which we experience in our teaching of English as a second language?

These became the horizons, or points of reference, as we shared our stories, described our experiences and feelings about them, and began to interpret the meanings of our lived experience of the E.S.L. classroom in this context.

IV. Voice

Throughout both the research itself and the writing up of the results, I have struggled with the many voices wanting to speak.

First was my own difficulty in choosing a voice while working with the teachers. Did I speak to them as "you and I" or as "we"? Because I identified so closely with the work they were doing and the program they were doing it in, I spontaneously used "we" in my speaking but, when I as reflective researcher found myself alone in my questions or in my understandings, I was reluctantly forced into using "I" and "you". To the extent that I was one of the creators of the program and was (and am) passionately committed to its intents, I was an insider entitled to speak as a participant. However, as a doctoral candidate striving to connect the practical and theoretical aspects of the work through the research, I was an outsider. While I found it necessary to accept that position and take that voice, I found it at the same time disconcerting in a variety of ways.

The "I" of the researcher alienated me from a group I had always felt very close to, indeed at one with. To be at one with a group of people is a very comfortable space for me to be in. For another thing, I listened to myself speaking with a rhetoric unfamiliar to most of this group and that gave rise to thoughts of the many languages which exist within that commonly defined as language. Teachers have long been conscious of the difference between academic discourse and "teacher talk". It has been experienced as alienating and I was determined not to fall into a position of creating that gap. Yet there were times when I felt I could not avoid it.

In the writing, I fought against the personal, emotional voice which I owned and felt entitled to but whose legitimacy I did not see as being acceptable in the pages of a dissertation. I gave myself, in the end, permission to use that personal voice in the first, fifth, and sixth chapters to varying degrees but tried, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to give myself the reflective distance I saw befitting a researcher. The voice of those chapters is, for the most part, more neutral and yet the participant in me refuses to be silenced even there and emerges in places as a tone of voice distinctly different from that which surrounds it.

Most importantly, perhaps, is the voice of the oppressed which gives me not only the courage but the necessity to speak, in a way, to advocate on behalf of the immigrant learner who has, as yet, no voice in this society. I am not an immigrant nor am I illiterate. In this society, I am considered to be amply endowed with many of the tools of power which would give me a voice in this society. Yet my commitment and, I hesitate to say, my identity is at one with the oppressed of this land for, as a woman and on top of that a single parent, I have often felt myself to be invisible and experienced my voice as having no sound in the corridors of power. I have made suggestions which were rejected until moments, days or months later, they were made by a man and accepted. I hold no rancour for individuals. All of us are caught up in a patriarchal way of viewing the world and expressing our being within it. That I do not consider myself an active feminist is less by choice than by circumstance. The circumstances of my life have placed me in the midst of Canada's most disadvantaged immigrants: people of little education, people of color, women. It is natural for me that I should feel at one with this group of people. Although their experiences have been different, the pain of some of those experiences has not been so different. When I listen to their stories, they feel heard and have shown me that. When I tell my stories to them, I feel heard. There is a bond of understanding and from that bond comes the voice which often swallows up the smaller voices within this writing.

There is one last aspect of voice which bears explanation. Those who have patiently read and reread the many drafts of this writing have consistently expressed a feeling of being overwhelmed by the number of questions I raise at every juncture. They feared that the sheer intensity of questioning might detract from the central questions I ask around the meaning of teaching in this context. In the final analysis, I set out to dutifully exterminate all but those questions immediately connected to the research question. By the middle of the second chapter, this process became, for me, unbearable for I felt like the life of "the question" was lived in the very intensity of that questionability of the field. The fact that one "simple" question of meaning could unleash such an unabated fury of related questions is an indictment of the stagnation which threatens our practice as T.E.S.L. educators. I could not eliminate questions as being unrelated because, for me, they are all related. So, I apologize, in advance, if you feel bombarded by the number of questions which surface but I have chosen to risk leaving most of them there because to do otherwise would violate, from my perspective, the integrity of my questioning process. I cannot frame as statements those thoughts which are, for me, very real questions. Nor can I omit them for the sake of clarity when such clarity would in fact strive to make simple and straightforward that which is, in my eyes, incredibly complex and intertwined. My "question" moves me along in a direction and with each step I take in that direction, I come to see how much there is to question, to learn, and to try to understand in a field where we take the responsibility not only for skill acquisition but for the re-creation of the very identity of those who come, in trust, to us to learn what they need to learn to survive and, hopefully, be happy in Canada.

Perhaps there is value in being bombarded by the enormity of what we do not know.

Chapter 2

PERSPECTIVES IN LANGUAGE AND CURRICULUM AS THEY RELATE TO ADULT E.S.L. THEORY AND PRACTICE

I. Purpose and Scope of A Review of Selected Literature

It is the purpose of this research to gain some insights into what it *means* to teach E.S.L. to adult immigrants in Canada when such persons have little formal education in their countries of origin. In the review of selected literature, I have limited my search to three areas: the nature of language, the nature of current curriculum practice in adult E.S.L. and the situation of the less-educated (formally) non-English-speaking immigrant adult in Canadian society.

The first finding as I scanned numerous T.E.S.L. journals and bookshelves was that T.E.S.L. researchers and writers had not, until the past five years, evidenced to any significant degree much interest in asking questions of meaning. Whereas I found evidence of change in mainstream T.E.S.L. practice, those changes did not appear to be based on any questioning of the most basic assumptions underlying our practice. The questions were, primarily, of a linguistic rather than cultural, political or philosophical nature. Many researchers were interested in increasing their understanding of very specific phenomena within the act of learning a language but relatively few were interested in discovering or questioning the fundamental assumptions, beliefs, values and meanings upon which our practice is based.

In the first part of this review, I have looked to the philosophers of language for their understandings as to what language is because I think their views are relevant to having a sense of the essence and parameters of what is to be taught. In the second part, I have organized themajority of the information I studied on the various forms of T.E.S.L. curriculum into four categories based on the understanding of language in which each of the forms of curricular practice appeared to be rooted. That is summarized in chart form as Table 1 at the end of section III of this chapter. Lastly, I have turned to a small selection of readings which name in some way what life is like for an immigrant adult with little formal education here; his or her choices are relatively limited as compared to those of educated persons born in this country, especially if that person is of a non-white race.

II. E.S.L. Research and Questions of Meaning

At the international T.E.S.O.L. (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages) Conference held in Toronto in 1983, Raimes gave a paper called "Tradition and Revolution in T.E.S.L. Teaching" (1983). In it she says that the primary problem with E.S.L. scholarship has been that "the scholars are looking at classroom methodology and not at the underlying intellectual assumptions which generate methods." (p. 538) A quick scan of the titles of articles within the T.E.S.O.L. Journal reveals an avid research interest in measurable results; techniques for teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening; and in learning acquisition. Very few articles raise the kinds of conceptual questions to which Raimes refers, questions as to the meaning of language or the vision of what it means to teach another. Nor do they question the experience of those in our E.S.L. programs.

Raimes' paper examines second language teaching in the light of Kuhn's (1970) theory of paradigm shifts in science. After illustrating the confusion and controversy evident in E.S.L., which would be, she says, indicative of such a shift, she concludes:

> "The prevailing assumptions of our discipline can thus be summed up as rooted firmly in the positivist tradition which prizes the empirical, the identifiable, the countable and the verifiable." (p. 538-9)

Like Raimes, Schumann (1983) feels that research is one-sided. He advocates what he calls a bilingual (nomothetic and hermeneutic) approach to language acquisition research. He feels that the research tendency in the field has been to regard research purely as science (i.e. quantitative) which he distinguishes from art (qualitative). He reminds us to heed Zukav's (1979) words and suggests that:

> "...we imitate quantum mechanics by entertaining the possibility that we create the reality we study, that observation alters reality and that the phenomena we investigate may only be amenable to description and not to (absolute) prediction or (testable) explanation," (Schumann, 1983, p. 109)

Kramer (1980) not only suggests that a qualitative dimension be added to E.S.L. research, he also addresses the problems of validity inherent to such a task and suggests four criteria by which such research could be evaluated:

1. point of view: the theory must be coherent and hermeneutically self-conscious.
2. innovation: the author must relate his or her position to previous positions in the field.
3. tone of voice: the author takes a stance in relation to his or her material and audience, i.e. humor, irony, etc.
4. metaphor: the imagery an author uses to express his or her reality captures for us to a greater or lesser degree the nature of that reality as perceived by the author.

These criteria are ways for those with an interest in such research to assess the meaningfulness or value thereof.

The question of validity in research is raised in a different way by McLaughlin's (1978) refutation of Krashen's (1977) distinction between language learning and language acquisition, on the grounds that to accept it would be to cause him to deny his own experience as a language learner.[1] He questions how research can be deemed valid by any person if it contradicts his or her basic experience. Various studies have been done in support of Krashen's hypothesis but McLaughlin refutes them on the basis of his experience. As obvious as it seems that we should indeed evaluate theory on the basis of our own experience, this has not been a common practice within this field. As a teacher, I would like to be informed by my own experiences as a stranger in other cultures, as a learner of second languages, as a student in general and I am confident that I could learn much also from the experiences of my colleagues. I would like to reflect upon these experiences and see their relevance for our teaching. I would hope that we would not deny our experience in favor of what "the research" tells us. McLaughlin found Krashen's claims untenable as have many authors in recent years, arguing that it is overly simplistic to divide the two.

III. Questioning the Nature of Language in Relation to the Teaching of English as a Second Language

A. Introduction

Beneath the surface of our curricular intents, materials, activities and evaluations, in any program, lies some implicit or explicit notion as to the nature of language itself: how we understand the phenomenon of communicating in a language and how we see the relationship between language and the experience of being human, between language and thought, language and culture, and between language and human development. These words are, among other things, abstractions from human experience. Because the words are common does not mean that the understandings behind them are necessarily shared.

Current E.S.L. teaching in Canada could be categorized into four kinds of approaches according to the underlying understanding of language which supports each: language as form, language as tool, language as that which enables communicative competence and language as meaning-making. These categories are by no means mutually exclusive; each successive category seems to incorporate those before it, adding on a new emphasis or dimension. Each of these understandings of language points to a different set of relationships between language and other aspects of human experience and, consequently, to different understandings of second language (L2) education. Each of these categories will be outlined in detail in the pages which follow, together with selected writings which illustrate each. They are summarized in table format at the end of this section.

Before looking at the curricular approaches, let us first consider the views of a small number of philosophers and other authors concerned with the nature of language in relation to human experience.

B. Reflections on the Nature of Language

> "Our needs are made of words: they come to us in speech, and they can die for lack of expression. Without a public language to help us find our own words, our needs will dry

> up in silence. It is words only, the common meanings they bear, which give me the right to speak in the name of the strangers at my door."
>
> (Ignatieff, 1984, p.142)

The immigrant is a stranger in a new land. She or he comes to Canada with a language and culture different from ours and probably wants to experience belonging here but at what sacrifice to her or his selfhood? I have seen men and women of exuberant spirit slowly seem to shrink and pale as they fail to find the words, in the language of the strangers, to express their needs, feelings and stories, their "I-ness" to those unknown persons around them. For these people, the notions of language as tool or language as form fail to capture the way in which their whole experience of the world is interwoven with their languaging[2] in the world.

The human need to understand and be understood by other human beings seems to stand at least close to the center of our experience of language. There is a Chinese proverb which reads:

> "Not to let a word get in the way of its sentence
> Nor to let a sentence get in the way of its intention
> But to send your mind out to meet the intention as a guest,
> THAT is understanding." (in Richards, 1983a, p. 219)

Language is imperfect at best but it is part of what it means to be human: to have language, to be in language and to use language.

We think of language as a shared system of meaning-making. Within a particular language there is a high degree of commonness in the understandings attached to words, gestures, and tones. Without those shared understandings, there would be no communication. There is, however, a tendency amongst unilingual speakers to assume that language is no more than a set of signs hung on objects in an objective universal reality in order to talk about that reality. Perhaps it was such a group of speakers to whom an old woman in Zambia addressed the following words: "You people do not understand your words do not belong to our minds." (in Fuglesang, 1982, p. 20)

In two or more cultures coming together, there are two or more views of reality coming face to face, and it is not easy to determine that communication has taken place. I believe there is often an assumption that one view will prevail and the speaker with the "other" view (the newcomer) will step into that understanding or viewpoint. Phrased like this, it does not seem like a very appealing idea and yet that is just what we have seemed to expect of the learners of English as a second language, that they will simply accept our view of reality which may or may not have a great deal in common with their own.

> "The assumption that we are so privileged that everyone wants to be like us is a peculiarly American problem. We can get over it a little bit if we undergo the humiliation of

> trying to learn another language. If we are full human beings, we are called on to let ourselves be absorbed into other people's points of view as well as to welcome others into the country." (Altree, 1973, p.31)

As E.S.L. teachers, we face daily the coming together of two or more cultures face to face in our classrooms. Often unbeknownst to ourselves, we make assumptions about whose points of view shall shift and in what directions. How is it that we come to make these assumptions? If we leave them unquestioned, why is that so? I wonder what kinds of assumptions E.S.L. learners make in the same regard.

Some authors have concentrated on the analytical nature of language. Language, says Cassirer (1955), enables us to progress from the world of mere sensation to the world of intuition and ideas (p.88). Ideas require us to abstract from our experience of the world, to analyse and name it. Speech, says Vygotsky (1978, p.33), is essentially analytical. He explains this as follows:

> "The role of language in perception is striking because of the opposing tendencies in the nature of visual perception and language. The independent elements in a visual field are simultaneously perceived; in this sense, *visual perception is integral.* Speech, on the other hand, requires sequential processing. Each element is separately labelled and then connected in a sentence structure, *making speech essentially analytical.*" (ibid. p.33)

We are a culture highly dependent on words, especially written words, for our survival. This would imply that relative to those less surrounded with language, especially written, we would be more analytical. If that were so, what would it mean to teach from an analytical standpoint to a learner whose standpoint excludes the written word and whose world has been one of coping with more basic realities, people such as the Vietnamese fisherman, the Laotian marketplace hawker, or the Latin American from the countryside? When I consider the practical nature of language in such extremely varied contexts, I am deeply aware of how little I know of the learners' lifeworlds.

When I read articles such as Vygotsky's above, I have the feeling that a lot of the research on second language acquisition is done with learners who are reasonably well-educated in the basics, while I have been working primarily with those who are not. Some of the work being done gives me insights while some of it seems not to be so relevant to those learners with whom I work. I become aware of the danger of overgeneralizing the results of what we are learning in this area.

I have seen in the learners to whom I have become close that their resistance to learning the language is often a function of their fear of losing any farther their identity as persons. As our experience of the world is closely structured by the language we speak, our very identity is likewise structured by language. Cassirer (1955) attributes to Von Humboldt the following:

> "In each one of its freely projected signs the human spirit apprehends the object and at the same time apprehends itself and its own formative law." (p.92)

Is it possible, in our expectation that others learn our language, that we are also expecting them to see the world as we do, to, in fact, take on a new identity, one more in keeping with our own? If so, how could we justify that to ourselves and to the learners?

Gusdorf (1965) defines "the great educator" as one who helps:

> "...the other to use his own voice, one who will stimulate him to discover his innermost need. Such is the task of the teacher, if, going beyond the monologue of instruction, he knows how to carry the pedagogical task into authentic dialogue where personality is developed. The great educator is one who spreads around himself the meaning of the honor of language as a concern for integrity into the relations with others and with oneself." (p.125)

Language is Voice but can Voice be separated from one's willingness to express it? In what ways do we as E.S.L. teachers enable others to use their *own* voice, the voice that speaks to *their* reality, not just that part of their reality they share with our own or that part of their reality which supports our own?

Bloomfield, Morton and Einar Haugen (1973) see language as a human problem. In a text edited by them, Dell Hymes says that ethnographic work is required as a foundation for understanding the ways in which language is a human problem. He points to the ideas of Bernstein and Habermas as they focus on the functional organization of linguistic resources in society to stimulate such ethnographic work. Habermas distinguishes between what he calls symbolic interaction and language used for purposes of technological and bureaucratic rationality. How might one describe the language of the E.S.L. classroom and how is it that it is so? Bernstein's interest is in the role of language in constituting social reality given a practical interest in the transformation of social relationships. Do our E.S.L. curricula reflect an interest in maintaining current social relationships as they are, or in transforming them? How is it that it is so?

Language poses a particular problem for education in that it is viewed as both content and the medium through which knowledge is acquired (Cazden, 1973). Language mediates our experience of the world. As a medium, it has a transparency which Polanyi (1964) describes as follows: when we use words in speaking or in writing, we are aware of them only in a subsidiary manner. "Subsidiary awareness and focal awareness are mutually exclusive." (p.57) This seems to be one of the central dilemmas in L2 teaching and learning: to make meaning in a language is to render the language transparent but to learn a second language is to attend to the meanings which aspects of that language have to native speakers therein. On the one hand, the learner is called upon to focus upon the way the language "works" in order to make it "work" for her or himself, and on the other hand, just as a pianist cannot make music if thinking about which fingers are on which keys, a speaker cannot be said to 'make meaning' in the fullest sense of the expression if she or he is focussed upon the language as a tool. As teachers, how is it that we negotiate the delicate but essential balance between *using* a language (coping within a social system) and *making meaning* within it (creatively interacting within and with that social system)?

At least two levels of language can be readily seen in the average E.S.L. classroom: the language of the "lessons": that is, the structures, words and functions the learner is intended to acquire; and the language of the educational context: the labels applied to persons within that context, the way in which explanations are made, instructions given, and procedures followed. Because our attention is most often upon the former, we may fail to see the lived curriculum of the latter for the learner. As educators, how can we move from what Apple (1979, p.125) calls a commonsense stance into a theoretical one and look at both these manifestations of language to see what the ideologies are which are supporting them? Language is not neutral, Apple tells us, despite its neutral appearance. When we think our words are neutral, that is a sure sign we have not critically reflected upon the ideology we unknowingly promote, and that that ideology operates, therefore, to maintain the status quo. (Freire, 1970) How can we become more aware as teachers of the ideological implications of our teaching?

> "...the word is much more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible.... Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed--even in part--the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world." (Freire, 1970, p.75)

To what extent are our classrooms places of dialogue where "true words" are spoken?

C. Four Frameworks for Viewing "Language" in Second Language Programs

Introduction

One way of organizing E.S.L. theory and practice is to see it in relation to the implicit understandings of language represented therein. I have created four such categories: language as form, language as tool, language as that which enables communicative competence, and language as meaning-making. These forms succeed one another in an ever-expanding sense of what it is that language is. Each succeeding category does not deny the previous one or ones but rather includes them in a larger vision.

In the following pages, each of these views is described in relation to the curricular approaches supported by it, to the worldview which it represents, and to some of the research questions which have arisen in each instance. These views are not intended to be all-encompassing but rather to represent four views currently seen in Canadian classrooms today. There is no mention of audiolingualism which, while still rooted in an understanding of language as form (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 67) nonetheless served to move second language teaching out of an emphasis on reading and writing into a new attention to speaking and listening. Similarly, I have not dealt with various reactions against the 'method concept' such as those of Gattegno, Curran and Lozanov, all of whom gave us refreshing ideas in the face of structural approaches. (Sterne, 1983, p. 109)

1. LANGUAGE AS FORM

Until relatively recently, the dominant methodology in second language instruction was the grammar-translation method. In this approach, language was seen as a form whose structure was the syntax and whose parts were the lexicon at one level, and sounds (pronunciation) at another. The methodology was highly dependent on reading and writing since the grammar and vocabulary were to be learned through written exercises and memorization. In curricula wherein language was viewed only as form, the emphasis in language learning was upon correctness as it was believed that if one employed words and structures correctly, one would be successful in communicating. (The use of the past tense in discussing this methodology is not intended to imply that it is no longer used but that it is no longer the mainstream of E.S.L. practice.)

Curran (1982) calls this approach to language learning the "astronomy model" in which the language to be learned is viewed as 'out there' awaiting discovery. This reflects an empirical-analytical or technical worldview (Aoki, 1978) in which reality is out there, life can be explained with certainty and predictability and the person (subject) acts upon the world (object) in a one-way sort of relationship.

In classrooms based on this worldview, the student is viewed as the one who lacks knowledge of English language forms and the teacher as one who has this knowledge. Out of this view came the frequently held belief that anyone who spoke a language could teach it.

The primary curricular intent was to master the linguistic forms as efficiently as possible and this was done through memorization and drills. Materials consisted of grammar textbooks, exercise books, and pronunciation exercises in those instances where the spoken language was considered important.

Evaluation was purely achievement-oriented. A student was evaluated on the basis of correctness. In many countries today, English as a foreign language is taught from a language-as-form perspective. In Korea, I was amazed to meet students who had passed written examinations of great grammatical difficulty but could not carry on the most basic conversation with me, students who in fact understood nothing I said. This speaks to the shortcomings of this approach to language learning; a focus on form alone is inadequate to dealing with the problems of using a language communicatively or of making meaning within it.

The research undertaken from this perspective addresses questions of how the parts of the language relate to one another, the assumption being that if this is understood and mastered, the language can be easily learned.

Although most researchers are now talking about language as function and about communicative competence, the notion of language as form still has a very strong hold upon the theoretical consciousness. For example, there is a study by d'Anglejan, Painchaud and Renaud (1986) into the communicative abilities of adult immigrants which followed intensive instruction over a thirty-week period. This study appears to place correctness as the ultimate end of instruction. The authors say their aim was to describe the oral proficiency of their subjects in functional rather than formal terms, and used the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) interview as their data-eliciting tool. (p.187) Performance in this instrument is judged in five categories: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension on a scale of six which ranges as follows:

accent:	foreign------------native
grammar:	inaccurate---------accurate
vocabulary:	inadequate--------adequate
fluency:	uneven-------------even
comprehension:	incomplete---------complete

In looking at these categories, one can readily see that correctness is what is sought in the first two categories but, in the given explanation for assessing vocabulary, accuracy and quantity are the means of determining "adequacy". Fluency is determined not by the speaker's success in communicating her or his thoughts, ideas and questions but rather in whether or not she or he does so evenly or unevenly with a top score given for "speech on all professional and general topics as effortless and smooth as a native speaker's."(p. 204) Comprehension scores are tied to ability to comprehend specified content with the low score of two defined as "understands only slow, very simple speech on common social and touristic topics; requires constant repetition and rephrasing" and a high score of 6 defined as "understands everything in both formal and colloquial speech, to be expected of an *educated* (italics mine) native speaker." (p. 205)

The study concludes that 15-20% of the learners still experienced considerable difficulty in communicating in spite of intensive instruction and makes the following observation:

> "It would appear that both adequate instruction in formal learning situations plus opportunities for interaction with well-disposed native speakers in social or workplace environments are necessary to ensure that immigrant learners will progress beyond a minimal knowledge of the target language towards more advanced levels necessary for securing satisfactory employment." (ibid. p. 187)

In this study the learners were deemed to be successful or not according, not to their ability to communicate with a native speaker, but to their ability to communicate "adequately", "accurately", "evenly", and "completely" with a "well-educated" native speaker. This suggests that language is form, and not just any form, but a form which excludes large numbers of people even within the native language. I am reminded of the words of a student in a letter to a professor cited in Tosi:

> "Languages are created by the poor, who then go on renewing them forever. The rich crystallize them in order to put on the spot anybody who speaks in a different way."
> (Tosi, 1984)

Our curricular approach to the teaching of E.S.L. implies that we take a stand as to what language is acceptable or unacceptable, appropriate or inappropriate, adequate or inadequate. I wonder how conscious we are of making that judgment in our decisions to correct or otherwise respond to the utterance, to respond as a "teacher" or as an equal, to ask questions with "right answers" or questions which invoke genuine dialogue.

The underlying assumptions in E.S.L. curricula built upon language as form appear to conform to what Freire (1970) has called "banking education" (p. 59) in that it is assumed that it is the teacher's role to prescribe the linguistic content, which effectively means power is not seen as an issue in the classroom and culture is seen as a content unit separate from language. (For example, see the textbooks by Chastain (1976) and by Allen and Vallette (1972), textbooks still in current use today in some teacher training programs.)

> "Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness". (Freire, 1970, p. 31)

The assumption appears to be, in this instance, that the immigrant learner should become "like us" and that the E.S.L. classroom is a part of that re-socialization process.

2. LANGUAGE AS TOOL

> "One of the major reasons for questioning the adequacy of grammatical syllabuses lies in the fact that even when we have described the grammatical (and lexical) meaning of a sentence we have not accounted for the way in which it is *used* (ital. mine) as an utterance." (Wilkins, 1976, p.10)

At the time Wilkins' book Notional Syllabuses was published, about the only alternative to a grammatical syllabus was a situational one. The argument favoring the latter approach, she gives as follows:

> "Although languages are usually described as general systems, language is always used in a social context and cannot be fully understood without reference to the context.

> Our choice of linguistic forms may be restricted according to certain features of the social situation.... Therefore, rather than orientate learning to the subject and its content, we should take account of the learner and his needs. We should predict the situations in which the learner is likely to need the language and then teach the language that is necessary to perform linguistically in those situations." (ibid. p.16)

The weakness of the situational syllabus, Wilkins points out, lies in the difficulty of predicting the particular contexts in which learners will find themselves.

Her answer to the inadequacies of grammatical and situational syllabuses was the notional syllabus which "instead of asking how speakers of the language express themselves or when and where they use the language, (asks)...what it is they communicate through language." (p.18)

Whereas the approaches which regard language as form conceptualize language as an object to be analyzed, memorized and produced, the language-as -tool approaches see language as an object *in use.* In such approaches, teaching is organized in terms of functional content rather than form. The notional syllabus, Wilkins says, is superior to the situational one in that it can ensure that the most important grammatical forms are included and because it can cover all kinds of language functions, not only those that typically occur in certain situations. (p.19) Such a syllabus would include such notions as time: point of time, duration of time, time relations (e.g., past, present, future), frequency, and sequence.

Wilkins' text marked the beginning of a strong shift into functionally-organized learning materials and curriculum. Whereas there is a distinction between situational, functional and notional curricula, most practitioners in my experience have seen them as all of a kind and employ, within that range, an eclectic approach complete with grammar and vocabulary exercises where deemed appropriate.

The educational approaches consistent with a view of language as function are still very controlling and prescribed. Taylor (1982) asks if in our classrooms we are not spending too much time talking about the language and not enough time *using* it. He asks if we are neglecting to provide our students with sufficient opportunities to engage in real communication. (p. 29) I see a contradiction between desiring 'real' communication, which I would understand to be dialogue, and talking about 'providing' our students with opportunities to communicate. There is no dialogue if one person is in control of the communication opportunities. In curricula wherein the teacher's job is accepted by all concerned as providing opportunities to communicate, there is an implicit assumption that if the teacher does not do so, such opportunities are not there. How can we as teachers come to understand the relationship between the kinds of learning which take place because one is alive in the world and the kinds of learning which "happen" because we and others have intended that they should?

Brumfit (1983) sees curriculum as a public statement whose goal it is to be efficient. It is a piece of technology designed to cause change in the behavior of teachers and students and if it operates inefficiently, he says, it is a bad syllabus. The technical metaphor here is strikingly consistent: not only is language viewed functionally but education is also. This technical metaphor strikes at the heart of what I believe to be a very serious problem in E.S.L., namely the failure to distinguish between education and training[3]. This problem is not just forthcoming from educators but from the bureaucracies which fund E.S.L. programs. In Canada, "seats" are "purchased" for immigrant learners in educational institutions by the Canada Employment and Immigration Center (C.E.I.C.). These seats are called training seats. The implication is that language is a skill like any other and is acquired in a training mode. The efforts of some educators to move beyond training to education are thus handicapped by the very narrow fashion in which language and hence language learning are conceived at the level of the funding bureaucracy.

3. LANGUAGE AS A COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITY

'Communicative competence' is the term used to describe mainstream approaches to E.S.L. curricula. These approaches emphasize communicative activities which are designed to enable the learner to acquire the second language in a way as close as possible to the ways she or he acquired the first language. Such approaches mark a shift away from the focus on linguistic content, which mark the two earlier kinds of approaches, to a broader focus upon the learners' needs, as the curriculum developer and/or teacher understands them to be.

In all probability, most E.S.L. practitioners would agree that language teaching is about helping people learn to communicate in the new language. Not everyone, however, would agree on what it means to communicate. In the literature which comes out of the communicative competence approach, "competent" means "like an educated native-speaker", as has been shown in the study described previously. The third approach, therefore, hinges on this particular understanding of what it means to be competent in a language.

Communicative competence curricula are heavily informed by humanistic psychology, which Brown traces back to the work of Carl Rogers (1951). Rogers focussed on the development of a person's "self-concept and his personal sense of reality, those internal forces which cause a person to act." (Brown, 1980, p.76)

An example of a text expressive of this priority is that published in 1978 by Moskowitz', Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class, which gives teachers over three hundred pages of carefully described exercises for working humanistically in a foreign language classroom. Exercises are organized under such titles as "Discovering Myself", "My Strengths", "My Self-Image", and "My Values". This appears to be one of the best-selling books at E.S.L. conferences because, I believe, it appeals to the teacher's experience of the immigrant learner as one whose experience of the strange new land is one of alienation, loneliness and fear. Such humanistic techniques pave the way to meaning-making approaches because they demonstrate care for the whole experience of the individual learner in the classroom and recognize that whatever else language may be (form and function included) it is also the human being's way of expressing her or his experience of the world and such expression is an important aspect of what it means to be human. Such expression is, however, still in the control of the teacher who determines what is "appropriate" or "acceptable" for the classroom and who takes responsibility for eliciting that, often in the form of games or exercises.

Authors such as Masayuki, Takahashi and Yoneyama (1984) are not alone in their belief that the ultimate end of language teaching should be communicative competence. Whereas it is undoubtedly desirable for learners to come to a place of communicating easily and successfully in a language, can that be said to be the *ultimate* goal? Fluency is experienced within a broader context. We communicate for particular reasons, with particular others, in particular situations. Why does the individual learner want and need to communicate with whom, and in what contexts? Advocates of competency-based learning would say that it is possible for a teacher or curriculum developer to answer these questions. I question not only the possibility but also the desirability of so doing. Critical educators within E.S.L. see their programs as being nestled within a larger context of human development, for the person and the society. What kind of vision do we (the participants in this study) have as teachers of adult immigrants? Does our vision make a difference to our teaching? If so, what difference?

There are no doubt numerous variations in understanding what is meant by the term "communicative competence". Terrell (1982) defines it as meaning that:

> "...a student can understand the essential points of what a native speaker says to him in a real communicative situation and can respond in such a way that the native speaker interprets the response with little or no effort and without errors that are so distracting that they interfere drastically with communication." (p.161)

Terrell says we must lower our expectations for structural accuracy if we are going to raise our expectations for oral competence. Whereas a majority of teachers now embrace this idea, they are trapped by the fact that the kind of evaluation such as that cited earlier by d'Anglejan et al. still assesses competence on the primary basis of accuracy and other native-speaker-like aspects of expression. Why is it that competence is assessed relative to the way a native speaker (a well-educated native speaker, at that) behaves in language rather than by some other criterion such as whether or not the language learner, and the particular others with whom she or he speaks in English in the course of daily living, experience their communication as meaningful?

The notion of language as communicative competence in E.S.L. seems to coincide with the currently popular educational notion of competency-based curriculum. In a competency-based E.S.L. curriculum, one of the competencies presumed necessary to any adult living in this country is the ability to fill out a basic application form. Weinstein

(1984) cites, as an example of the meaninglessness of prescribed approaches which fail to account for the lived worlds of the learner, the situation of an older non-literate Hmong woman attending an E.S.L. class and being asked to fill out such a form:

> "For a person like her, memorization of the alphabet and its corresponding sounds is not only difficult, tedious and frustrating, it is also unnecessary. The exercise becomes a chore that will only add to their feelings of powerlessness in a bewildering new culture." (p. 481)

So, there appears to be a contradiction between the humanistic intentions of the communicative competence approaches, which would enhance the self-concept of the learner, and the curricular notions employed in competency-based approaches. Perhaps the problem lies in the curriculum planners' implicit assumption that all learners have the same needs and capacities. If that Hmong woman has no desire to go to work and has relatives who would fill out other kinds of forms for her, I agree as to the lunacy of asking her to suffer through the ordeal of supposedly learning to fill one out. An alternative is to strive to find ways of enabling every participant in a learning context to express her or his own needs and wants and participate to the degree she or he is able and willing in learning activities.

Auerbach (1986) is also critical of a competency-based approach to curriculum arguing that: "The listing of competencies defines reality as something external, objective and researchable." She agrees with Freire that:

> "This *world* is not a static and closed order, a *given* reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather it is a problem to be worked on and solved. It is the material used by man to create history, a task which he performs as he overcomes that which is dehumanizing at any particular time and place and dares to create the qualitatively new." (Freire, 1970, p.13)

This need to name competencies which has become so popular in North America seems to speak to the same dilemma about which several British theorists have written, a dilemma in which they feel caught between the needs and expectations of the public domain and the needs and expectations of the learner. Candlin (1983) sees the issue as one of freedom and constraint whereas Allwright (1978) calls it one of abdication and responsibility. For Allwright, it is the responsibility of the syllabus to "set out the 'things that have to happen' in a classroom if the experience is to have any chance of being a profitable one for the learners." Candlin says the syllabus is a social construct and therefore a retrospective record but structures that much more tightly than do other educators of a critical persuasion. At the 1985 A.T.E.S.L. (Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language) Conference in Banff, he outlined his method for "negotiated curriculum" which appeared to be that of giving learners choices within prescribed guidelines and, in so doing, walking the middle road between public constraint and individual freedom.

Freire (1970, 1981) and Apple (1979, 1982) say that there really is no middle road, that a curriculum either maintains the status quo by objectifying the learners or it moves towards emancipation by enabling learners to name their own world and act within it.

As previously stated, the view of language as communicative competence goes hand in hand with the view that learning theory is *the* crux of the issues surrounding E.S.L. (Taylor, 1982; Newmark, 1966; Spolsky, 1984). Whereas this might be seen as logical in a public school context where the student moves from his or her second language class on to all his or her other subject areas, I am unconvinced that this makes much sense in an adult setting where this class is quite possibly the only formal educational setting the immigrant will experience for some time. Is there an additional responsibility for the educator to open up more generalized possibilities for learning on the grounds that all learning involves languaging and therefore, language does not have to be the *focus* in order that language be learned? Mohan (1986) suggests that language learning might be expedited by viewing language as the medium of learning rather than the end thereof.

Early writings in the communicative competence understanding of language and language teaching emphasized language *acquisition* over language *learning*. Krashen (1981) is credited with this distinction between the natural processes of learning which accompany one's experience of the world (acquisition) and the typical classroom processes of learning which he calls 'learning'. The question was raised as to whether teachers really teach or rather, enable others to learn. (If teaching stands in opposition to enabling others to learn, I am forced to question what has been happening in the name of education.) Krashen suggested that traditional learning activities be limited to outside classtime and that classtime be relegated to communicative competence activities which enable the learner to acquire the language in ways similar to that of a child acquiring her or his mother language, an idea which served to help us to question our use of class time and what could be accomplished outside of classtime.

In other writing about communicative competence, it is questionable how different the underlying notion is to that of language as form. Widdowson (1983) says:

> "It is generally assumed to be self-sufficient that language-learning is a purposeful goal-oriented activity whose sole objective is the internalisation of a system of rules which define correct linguistic comportment, that is...the acquisition of competence." (p.97)

It is interesting that whereas Widdowson himself argues against that view, maintaining that native-speaker competence is of secondary importance to the essential creative process of the learner's engagement in learning through the exercise of her or his capacity to make meaning from the resources available in the new language, he also stresses efficiency in education. He says education is the superimposing "on individuals (of) schemes or systems of conceptual organization and behavior which are designed to supplement the processes of primary socialization" (ibid. p.1) without which he feels, learning would be inefficient, a function of trial and error. Perhaps, these notions of efficiency and dialogue are not mutually compatible notions in our understanding of second language curricula. For me, the process of dialogue is always a process of trial and error.

From Widdowson, Candlin and Allwright, all of whom advocate communicative competence in L2 teaching, there seems to be one overriding issue of relevance to this study: how do we as teachers resolve any conflict we see between the demands of the mandate given to us by the public domain and the needs of the classroom participants, as we understand both to be?

There is one other notion which appears frequently in the literature of communicative competence and is significant in its relation to the questions this study asks about meaning. That is the notion of "real" or "authentic" language. Xiaoju (1984) asks us to use real language in the classroom and defines that as "language that is used in communicative situations that are *relevant* to our students", a commendable intent which does not, however, deal with the problem of who determines such relevance and how.

Breen, Candlin and Waters (1979) speak also of "real communication" but go on to describe it as "ideal data for language learners" and says such language is often seen as too complex for their *use*. That would appear to put us back into the notion of language as function, and learner as object.

The deficiencies of the communicative competence approaches are evident in Robinson's distinction between authentic language and hollow language. (Robinson, 1981) Use of the former embodies, of necessity, the realities of culture whereas the latter consists of meaningless language. She likens the modernization of L2 methodology to a building which has been beautified above ground with no thought to the rotten foundation beneath, that foundation representing language, as it is viewed within the field. "We have been emphasizing the words and the structures and 'competence' without much attention to the specific nature of the ideas." (p.2)

Several authors are beginning to question assumptions within this paradigm. Canale and Swain (1980) in their classic article presenting a theoretical framework for teacher training question the role of the teacher in the second language classroom, agreeing with Morrow (1977) that the teacher will have to take on "an activating role as the instigator of situations which allow students to develop communication skills." (p. 10)

Recent writers are beginning to focus less on method and more on the assumptions which underlie our practice. Mohan (1986) and Snow et al (1989) question the relationship between language and content. Ashworth (1985) suggests the importance of the larger community in our language teaching. Pennycook (1989) discusses politics and the interests served in language teaching. Beretta and others question the relationship between form and content. We see new terms when we open the cover of the TESOL Quarterly, terms such as 'collaborative', 'context', and 'authentic discourse', which we had not seen in the titles of articles in earlier issues. (Nunan, 1989; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Cathcart, 1989)

Whereas authors writing in support of communicative competence approaches in recent years have indeed moved a long way from the traditional teacher-directed classroom towards a situation where learners are encouraged to negotiate meanings, I still see a profound difference between the work of most of these authors, which still, in my view, resides in a technical paradigm, and that of such authors as Arnold et al (1991) and Barndt (1991) who are motivated by a concern for social justice. Likewise, Cummins and Skutnabb-Kangas have drawn together an impressive array of internationally authored articles which examine minority education for school children and point out the importance of considering the crucial questions of identity and empowerment in that context. Whereas in the communicative competence approach, power is negotiated in the interests of language learning, in the meaning-making approach, power is shared in the interests of social justice.

4. LANGUAGE AS MEANING-MAKING

The view of language as meaning-making is different from the other three views of language in that it recognizes a dialectical relationship between language and human experience, both of which are always in a state of transformation. Whereas the other views represent language as that which is taken on, used and even experienced, there is no sense therein of the movement in language of the individual making a creative impact upon her or his world through the medium of language, or of the language itself having a similar impact on the individual. This dialectical view of language and human experience is consistent with what Freire (1970) calls the ontological vocation of (man) to be a "Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively." (p.12-13) In the other three views, language is seen as a body of knowledge to be learned and used *in order to* communicate competently or efficiently or correctly. In a meaning-making view of language, language mediates one's experience of naming and re-creating the world.

To communicate is at least partly to understand and be understood. What does it mean to understand? Novak (1971) reminds us that when we speak, we do so from a standpoint. We take a stand. To *under-stand* then is to share and know what lies under the stand of the other. It is to share in the world of meaning of the other.

Breen (1985) questions whether the meaning of the L2 classroom is to be found in the observable and asks that we "search for what is significant in the immediate and existential (historical) experiences of the classroom for those within it." (p.151) The nature of the classroom culture, he says, is in the meanings for teachers and learners of the way things are done, who does them and why. (p.149) For learner and teacher to experience fully these meanings, there is a need for them to be reflective upon their shared experience of the classroom. To be thus reflective is the beginning of making meaning together. The question of who is to determine the relevance of language content is no longer there if the situation is one in which people actually find themselves at the moment of reflection and dialogue.

Marcuse (1941) emphasizes the import of self-consciousness. In reference to Hegel's ideas, he says:

> "The world is an estranged and untrue world so long as man does not destroy its dead objectivity and recognize himself and his own life 'behind' the fixed form of things and laws. When he finally wins this *self-consciousness* , he is on his way not only to the truth of himself, but also of his world. And with the recognition goes the doing. He will try to put this truth into action and *make* the world what it *essentially* is, namely, the fulfilment of man's self-consciousness." (p.113)

So, self-consciousness might involve reflection on the culture of the classroom but it must also extend to the language itself. Language is the manifestation of a culture and, as such, works strongly to maintain the structure of social relations within that culture. Those who would wish to transform those social relations would do well to look to the language to see how it maintains the status quo.

> "Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of ordering, classifying and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community, that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live.
>
> Yet it is ironic that this faculty which helps to create our world also has the capacity to restrict our world. For having learned a particular language and had access to being 'humanized' we have also been 'socialized' in the process; we have also learned to confine our way of looking at the world to a particular cultural world view. Having learned the language of a patriarchal society we have also learned to classify and manage the world in accordance with patriarchal order and to preclude many possibilities for alternative ways of making sense of the world." (Spender, 1980, p. 3)

This notion of language as oppressor does not apply only to gender difference. In my efforts to learn Korean, I was frustrated by the need to address people according to my place in the (Korean) hierarchy relative to them. Since I do not *think* in this way, it was very difficult to remember and take this into consideration before I uttered even a simple farewell, which is not so simple in Korean where there are six possibilities depending on your relationship to the other and whether you are the one staying or the one leaving. By the fact that the Korean language dictates that the forms of address correspond to one's relative rank in a hierarchy, the differences which separate people within that social structure are maintained by the language itself. In what ways does English oppress and whom, under what conditions and how? Are there ways of discovering, acknowledging and changing that in the E.S.L. classroom?

Whereas the communicative competence approach with its humanistic beliefs encourages self-expression in its recognition of the value of a positive self-concept in learning, the curriculum-maker who works with a curriculum based on a meaning-making view of language would say it is not enough to express oneself, that reflection means moving beyond the telling of our stories to questioning what they mean in the context of our shared lives. In such a classroom, "we are supporting the sharing of daily experiences which can lead to a clearer understanding of social structures, a critical analysis and a readiness to act collectively." (Barndt, Cristall, marino, 1982, p.15) These authors see the classroom as a very political place and language as something that makes a difference. Darville (1983) seems to have discovered the difference during his visit to Nicaragua:

> "In Nicaragua and since returning, I have tried many times to define what is so striking in Nicaraguan speech. It is, I think, a mode of speech too seldom heard in Canada. People fix your eyes and say what they mean--not aggressively but also without holding back. This is the speech of people who know what they say makes a difference. Not "makes a difference" in the sense we're likely to mean it here--that "somebody up there" will take note. In Nicaragua, somebody up there probably will take note but what is striking about this speech is that it isn't aimed at somebody up there. This is the speech of people expressing changes in society they know to be of their own making. People speaking as the makers of history." (p. 14)

Educators such as Barndt, Cristall, marino (1982) and Wallerstein (1983) present a problem-posing approach to curriculum for refugee and other immigrant learners who "often experience social or emotional barriers to learning English: discrimination, cultural conflicts and lack of self-esteem (Wallerstein, 1983, p. 28) Such curricula have the clear intent of helping students to gain control over their lives. (p. 28) It could be argued that this is the goal of any language program, that a person who is fluent in the language automatically has greater control over her or his life. Has this been our experience as teachers? Does it/would it make a difference to our curricula to question that assumption?

Robbins (1982) questions the implicit assumption that because an immigrant has moved to Canada, she or he would automatically want to become part of "our" culture, as if that were an identifiable thing. He proposes a model of education based on Freire's *conscientizaçaõ* in which learners would define problems *from within their own cultural context* and come up with open-ended answers to those problems.

Those who subscribe to such curricular approaches to language learning see language as the mediator of human experience and feel that curricula which would break the language into discrete concepts and skills are reductionist in that "the sum of the parts does not equal the essence of the whole." (Auerbach, 1985, p. 2)

Curran points to the acronym T.E.S.O.L. (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and urges us to recognize that this acronym acknowledges two experts: the teacher and the speaker of another language. Such a recognition leads to a very different relationship between teacher and learner than the one in which the teacher is seen as one who knows and the learner as one who does not.

Stevick (1980) addresses the relationship of teacher and learner in his analogy of second language teachers to the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov. In this novel, the Prisoner was sentenced to death for failing in his efforts to have all people come to see the world--to see life--for themselves rather than letting someone else deliver them a simplified and printed map of it. The Grand Inquisitor argued that people were not capable of such independence and that they and the other powerful ones were obliged to convoy their poor blind frightened fellow humans from birth to the grave with only three tools to help them: miracle, mystery and authority.

> "Mystery is the substitute for independent thought; authority is what imposes and enforces mystery; miracle is what assures the follower that he has in fact trusted his destiny into the right hands." (ibid. p.284)

Language teachers create mystery, Stevick argues, by teaching too much before the learners are ready to learn, and by using our words rather than theirs to explain. We expect them to learn our language but have no interest in learning theirs. We make them dependent on us. From our methodological bandwagons we expect to work miracles: "trust me--I'm an expert--I can show you" is the message we give our students.

Stevick (1976) also points to the relationship between language and identity. In relation to pronunciation, for example, a learner's relationship to his or her own pronunciation is a matter of identity also:

> "I must know who I am and who I think I am not; seeking or rejecting closer ties with various groups is one way in which I verify and maintain that image of myself; how I use language is one way in which I communicate my desires relative to those groups." (p.59)

What kind of classroom dialogue would be conducive to this understanding of freedom as something "to be created"?

Aoki (1984), in addressing a conference of T.E.S.L. educators, said:

> "...the meaning of any second language is in the lives of those who wish to learn a language. You, as educators, have dedicated yourselves to the enhancement of their lives." (p.2)

Is this the task an E.S.L. teacher sees as hers or his within the mandate of what she or he sees education to be in this context? What does the language we as teachers use to talk about our teaching experiences reveal as to the cultural view we impose upon our work?

Maslow (1973) distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic learning. Whereas researchers such as d'Anglejan et al. (1986) tend to be looking for skill learning, they appear not to be concerned with the whole learner's experience of her or his language learning. Maslow describes as intrinsic learning that learning to be and become a particular human being, learning which accompanies the profound personal experiences in our lives. Surely the leaving behind of one's country, culture and language and the taking up of residence in a new strange context could be described as profound. What does it mean that our research and indeed our program evaluation most often focus upon measuring skills learned but largely ignore the *experience* of learning associated with profound change in the lives of the learners? The hidden assumptions in this decision suggest, frighteningly, that we have not cared about the learners' experience, that it has been somehow less important than our skill in "getting the content across".

A Word on Charts

There follows, in table format, a summary of these four approaches to E.S.L. teaching. As I have mentioned previously, it is not intended to be complete. The reader is reminded that each succeeding column includes and makes use of the approaches preceding it. One criticism which has been levelled against this model before has been the similarity of columns 2 and 3, the functional-notional and communicative approaches to curriculum. My reason for separating them is my belief that a concern with self-esteem on the part of the language learner is a crucial one and marks a shift out of strictly functional curriculum which is still a linguistic mode of organizing language units of instruction. The table which follows, like the descriptions which have preceded it, is an arbitrary one which quite simply provided me with an organizing framework for what I saw happening in the program under study. It is not intended to be used more comprehensively than that.

TABLE 1: Four Views of ESL Teaching According to Inherent Understanding of Language in Each

	LANGUAGE AS FORM	LANGUAGE AS TOOL	LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	LANGUAGE AS MEANING-MAKING
View of Language:	Language is a relatively fixed form of prescribed grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. It represents the world 'out there'.	Language is a tool which human beings USE to communicate with others.	Language is a tool we use to enable our communication with others; it is a means of self-expression which is an important aspect of being human.	Language is the medium of human experience. Both are in a state of on-going transformation.
Worldview:	Reality is out there awaiting discovery and mastery. Life can be explained with certainty and predictability.	as in language as form	as in language as form but with more awareness as to subjective perceptions of reality.	Reality is intersubjectively constituted. Reflection upon reality is inseparable from acting upon reality. Life is a mystery and can be improved.
Curriculum Form:	Grammar-translation.	Functional, prescribed.	Communicative competence, Competency-based; prescribed with some negotiation of altertives in some programs.	Participatory, emergent. Lived curriculum and curriculum plan are linked through reflection.
Intents:	1. correctness 2. primary emphasis on reading and writing. 3. mastery of knowledge *about* the form.	1. ability to make language "work" in specific situations. 2. speaking and listening as well as reading and writing seen as important.	1. communicative competence i.e. able to speak like an educated native speaker. 2. emphasis on acquiring the spoken language . 3. good self-concept seen as NB to acquiring L2.	To make meaning in the English language. i.e. to better understand our lived experience and to transform it so that life will be better.
Resources:	Grammar texts, workbooks, good bilingual dictionary.	Functionally-organized texts, workbooks, tapes for speaking and listening practice. Lots of repetition	Native-speakers and other L2 learners. Tapes and workbooks to be used outside classtime primarily.	Participants and their lives as expressed by them in story, art, drama, and photography.

	LANGUAGE AS FORM	LANGUAGE AS TOOL	LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	LANGUAGE AS MEANING-MAKING
Activities:	Memorization, frequent quizzes, pattern drills, memorization.	Memorization of functional dialogues; classroom practice of the above; explanation of grammar rules therein and memorization of certain forms. More attention to pronunciation and to appropriateness of language in specific situations.	Roleplays, question and answer practice. Grammatical explanations, conversations, thematic and situational activities. Oral activity with reading, writing and listening practice assigned as homework.	Story-telling and writing, artwork, creative dramatizations, problem-posing.
Evaluation:	Primarily seen as evaluation of learners. Written grammar and vocabulary tests, reading comprehension tests, and later, listening comprehension tests. Programs evaluated on basis of learner test results.	Same as in language as form.	Same as in language as form.	An on-going attitude toward the process of finding value in making meaning. Programs evaluated by participants throughout in order to improve them. Criteria of success is meaningfulness of communication and experience.
Questions of Power:	Curriculum is teacher-directed and content-centered. Learner learns for him/herself.	Same as in language as form.	Curriculum is teacher-directed but learner-centered, as teacher understands learner needs and abilities. Learners have to work together in order to work for themselves.	Curriculum is participant-centered with teacher and student both considered learners and both experts with different expertise. Students offer lived experience of their lives. Out of the dialogue, curriculum emerges. Learners work cooperatively.

	LANGUAGE AS FORM	LANGUAGE AS TOOL	LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	LANGUAGE AS MEANING-MAKING
Questions of Culture:	Culture is a non-issue in language teaching.	It is recognized that functions differ from one culture to another. Culture is relevant in terms of deciding when a speech act is appropriate or not.	Same as in language as tool.	Persons are culture-makers. As they constitute meaning inter-subjectively, they are re-making culture in ways that are more just and more humanly satisfying. Culture and language are inextricably bound.
Research Questions:	How does the language work? (How can we accurately describe the rules of grammar?)	How does the language work? (What are the functions into which the language can be analyzed?) What are the most efficient techniques for getting students to master the use of the linguistic forms?	How is a language learned? How is a second language learned? What are the extra-linguistic aspects of language-learning? How can teachers enable language acquisition?	What is language? What is education? What is our (the student's and the teacher's) lived experience of the world? What does it mean for two or more cultures to come together in a classroom?
Vision of Society:	Not considered relevant.	Not considered relevant.	Not considered relevant.	Society is unjust for many immigrants. Education is a means of social transformation for a more just society. Language learning is about finding a Voice.

IV. THE SITUATION OF THE NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANT IN CANADA

> My Job
>
> I work in a factory. It's a glass factory.
> I am a glass cutter. I cut glass.
>
> There are three different shifts at the factory.
> I work the day shift, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
> I punch in just before 8:00 and I punch out at 4:30.
> If I am five minutes late they discount 15 minutes from my pay.
>
> We have three breaks during the shift.
> The morning coffee break is at 10:15. It lasts for 15 minutes.
> There is another 15-minute coffee break at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.
> We have half an hour for lunch. I have lunch at 12:30.
> I eat in the cafeteria with my co-workers.
> We do not have much time to talk.
>
> Working with glass is dangerous.
> We have to take safety precautions to prevent accidents.
> I must wear gloves.
>
> I am paid by the hour. The rate of pay was $3.00 to start.
> After three months I got a 20-cent raise. Now I earn $3.20 an hour.
> I work 40 hours a week. I get paid every Friday. (Unda, 1980, p.40)

The above description by an E.S.L. learner sounds very familiar. The work of this person is described as low-paid, dangerous, monotonous (in its scheduling at least), and devoid of much communication. There is a hint of injustice in losing fifteen minutes of pay for five minutes of lateness. The worker appears to have little sense of power over his/ her world. In what ways does the world of the E.S.L. classroom prepare the immigrant learner for the realities of the workplace? In what ways does the E.S.L. classroom perhaps pave the way for a *particular* experience of the workplace? Do we as teachers make assumptions about the kind of work available to immigrants such that these expectations have some power in creating that very reality?

E.S.L. teachers have tried to enable students to be more correct in their speaking, believing that correctness will help them to become part of the larger society: find work, make friends, and participate in the community. In what ways do our efforts to encourage correctness have the concurrent effect of distancing the learner from mainstream society as one who is different? In what ways does the classroom experience highlight the learner's membership in the *human* community and in what ways does it highlight his/her differentness from others in that human community?

One group of immigrants to this country seems to suffer more than the others, namely women. Planning and research on immigration in Canada has historically almost ignored immigrant women. Immigrant women are over-represented in certain low-wage service and manufacturing jobs such as domestics, chamber maids, building cleaners, dishwashers, waitresses, sewing machine operators and plastics workers. They are ignored by unions and inadequately protected by provincial labor legislation. The high unemployment in many of these areas ensures few complaints from those suffering injustice. (Arnopoulos, 1979)

In addition, changes in 1977 to the Immigration Act in Canada in Canada provide fewer civil rights than did the old act:

> "Under the former Immigration Act, only landed immigrants who did not have domicile (five years residence then, none now unless you become a citizen which takes 3 years residence) could be deported if the authorities thought they might engage in subversive activities." (p. 41)

Immigrant women have reported to their interviewers in that study that if they complain to bosses about unfair labor practices, these people start damaging stories about them to Immigration and they fear deportation. Furthermore, since many unions espouse leftist causes, many workers are hesitant to be associated with the union since that could be interpreted by the R.C.M.P. as subversive. "Every newcomer knows someone who has had a knock at the door by an Immigration Officer and has eventually been deported." (p. 450) In what ways do our E.S.L. classrooms acknowledge or deny the world of fear and anxiety in which many immigrants live? What ethical responsibility do teachers have to advocate on behalf of those whose predicaments we know when their circumstances are such that they are unable to advocate on their own behalf?

A report of the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights, written for the House of Commons, says that immigrants are admitted, in part, on the basis that they will be either self-sufficient or will receive adequate family support in Canada. (Boyer: 1985, p. 59) If this is also the expectation that Canadian society holds for the immigrant, how is the experience of the learner in an E.S.L. classroom affected by the larger context of unemployment and underemployment faced by large numbers of immigrant workers? In what ways does the classroom acknowledge or deny that experience?

Here is how one tired immigrant worker describes his experience:

> "Night is when people rest,
> But I, wretched one, never rest.
> Water rests, the wind rests,
> The wind finds peace, I never find peace." (in Tosi, 1984)

In what ways do we as teachers of those who experience life as "wretched" understand what that means? In what ways do we, can we, find ourselves in dialogue with such a one?

The problems of the immigrant are the problems of the working class, says Greenfield (1976). Focussing on issues such as multiculturalism prevents us from focussing on the real issues of inequality (Ashworth, 1975). How appropriate, how meaningful, is it for E.S.L programs to direct their attention to language learning alone if such programs exclude from the curriculum other relevant questions regarding the skills and understandings needed to cope with issues of inequality, injustice and marginalization in the larger society? In the teaching of 'language' are there opportunities for the learner to come to the place of naming such a world and of acting to recreate that into a different reality?

V. SUMMARY

This review of selected literature has been concerned with E.S.L. curriculum as it relates to various understandings of the meaning of language and power in the classroom. In it, many questions have surfaced, questions intended not to divert from the basic research question of meaning, but rather to reveal its depth and breadth.

Whereas I acknowledge that the questioning is at times too much, I feel justified in letting the questions stand because when one is trying to knock down a wall which has been re-plastered as often as E.S.L. curriculum has been "reformed", only a bombardment of some magnitude stands a chance of making significant cracks in the foundation.

The table which appeared at the end of the third section of this chapter is a summary of the four approaches to E.S.L. curricula described in the chapter. The categories are not mutually exclusive. Each successive approach enfolds that which came before into its greater vision of what it means to teach E.S.L. The first three approaches, each increasingly complex, are all of a basically technical nature. Only the fourth approach poses a qualitatively different paradigm in that the learner is no longer a dependent object in the educational experience but is instead an active subject therein. The fourth approach, meaning-making, could be said to mark the difference between an educational program and a training program, into which category the first three approaches fall. (See also Footnote 3.)

Table 1 forms a viewing framework in which responses to this research question may be situated. In the dialogical process with the teachers, assumptions, values, and understandings were revealed. The table provides an organizing format for locating these as they appear in the chapters which follow. Whereas I was expecting to have to make major adjustments to this table as I began to work with the data, I found that few were required as the structures proved well-suited to the purpose for which they were designed.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH AS A COMING TO KNOW

> "Open education points to the search for communities by groups of people on pilgrimage, working the land with their tools, building the structures that house them from the elements, caring for those who are pushed into their presence, reshaping their life together, and telling and retelling the stories of where they have been and where they seem to be going." (Huebner, 1974:52)

Huebner's words capture, for me, the essence of what collaborative research in education is all about. It is about people working together in search of meaning, past, present and future, people who know that their journey for meaning cannot be separated from their action upon the world in which they journey. Furthermore, it is about communities, about searching for them, and in the searching, creating them. When one sets out on a pilgrimage, one meets other pilgrims along the way and discovers the common journey.

Introduction

In that this research has been a quest for meaning, the meanings from which a select group of teachers work in one corner of adult E.S.L., it was also a pilgrimage, for me and for the four teachers who chose to join me for a period of time in my quest.

In seeking to understand what it means to teach in this special context, I have looked at both the theory and the practice from a number of different perspectives. I have begun with my personal experiences, reflecting upon them, considering the questions to which they gave rise, talking with others who have shared the contexts of some of those experiences. Then, I looked to the literature of the T.E.S.L. field and there I have come to see in what ways my questions are similar and in what ways different from the questions others ask in the field. I now look to the field of educational research in general and find that the work of a relatively small group of men and women referred to as "the reconceptualists" has much to say to my question. As I cherish story, they do also. As I find value in my journal and those of learners with whom I work, they find value in their journals and those of teachers with whom they work. As they see the need for developing a critical perspective upon our work in order to nourish it and give it life, so too do I value the opportunities which have done so for me. Even as they reject the positivistic view of research which tries to stand beside rather than in the midst of life and tranformation so too do I see theory and practice as one movement. I feel very humble to find myself in the broader community of this group of individuals who have so valiantly challenged the status quo in education.

In this chapter, I have highlighted those points within reconceptualist thought which I believe are relevant to this study and have elaborated on those aspects of their approach to research which I have interpreted for purposes of this project. Then, I have written a timeline with the steps involved in the actual carrying out of the work. Lastly, I have named the issues I saw as confronting me before I began and have commented briefly upon my response to them and the results thereof.

The Reconceptualists

Curriculum theory as a field of studies is relatively new, having begun as an administrative, problem-solving area in the 1920's. Although a few sought to humanize the theory in the 1930's, it was not until the fifties and sixties when scientific management reigned supreme that educators such as Paul Klohr, James B. MacDonald and Dwayne Huebner labored to promote a curriculum field with a self-critical and transformative vision. (Pinar and Grumet, 1981) The term 'reconceptualists' first became popularized with Pinar's 1975 book of that title. In reconceptualist thought, there is a coming together of critical theory, hermeneutics, phenomenology and humanist traditions.

What they have recognized is the widespread tendency for educators to have viewed their work as a technical enterprise, a means to a predefined end. These educators, Pinar calls traditionalists. (Pinar in Giroux, et al. (Ed.), 1981, p.88) These early curricularists were characterized by an ahistorical stance, an allegiance to behaviorism and a technological rationality. Improvement in schools is judged by behaviorally observable change. The popular alternative to the traditionalist school, recognized by such theorists as Schwab and Huebner (Young, 1971, p.107) to be "ill" are the conceptual-empiricists, a name which comes from the use of these terms in the social sciences. Their work consists of developing hypotheses to be tested with mainstream social science methodology. Whereas they acknowledge the political nature of curriculum, they fail to see that understanding is possible only if curricular issues are situated historically and economically, which the reconceptualists strive to do by beginning with real experiences and reflecting upon the meaning of those experiences. (Pinar, 1981, p.94)

In the seventies, various curriculum theorists tried to come to terms with the differing notions of what curriculum, and consequently curriculum research, were about. (Eisner and Vallance, 1974; Pinar, 1975) The major difference between the reconceptualists and the other theorists seems to be their conceptualization of curriculum as lived experience, a considerably larger notion than the usual one of it being only the prescribed content of a course of studies. Grumet (1978) describes curriculum as "the process of persons coming to form not content." (p. 278)

Grumet and Pinar look to literary criticism and aesthetic criticism to inform curriculum criticism. Their terminology reflects this grounding:

> "Within experience meaning is a relationship that exists between situation and action. Within a familiar situation, curriculum as new experience stands out against the ground of ordinary experience, both revealing and transforming it." (Grumet and Pinar, 1978, p. 276)

The notion of revealing and transforming as being inseparable partners in the process of coming to know is a key one in reconceptualist thought. It is not new. Dewey said, "What the organism learns during the process produces new powers that make new demands upon the environment." (Grumet, 1978, p. 281) Merleau-Ponty also wrote that a new or created form becomes a cultural object that changes the character of the environment in which the organism feels newly adjusted." (ibid. p.286)

To speak of revealing implies that something is hidden. That something Merleau-Ponty refers to as the preconceptual, that which exists prior to knowledge. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) Husserl too urged us to return to the "things themselves", the implication being that we had somehow lost sight of them. From such philosophers we get a sense of the groundedness of knowledge. Knowledge does not exist in and of itself but in an historical, social, political, and linguistic context. Curriculum, says Grumet (1978), "is the world of meanings that we have devised and ...as teachers and students we (must) assume responsibility for (it)..and for the action that it admits." (p. 286) It is the world of meanings which curriculum research in the reconceptualist school seeks to reveal.

I. Research as Praxis

Carr and Kemmis (1986) distinguish between 'practice', the habitual or customary, and *praxis*, the Greek notion meaning informed, committed action, action which is reflectively understood and intended. "*Praxis* has its roots in the commitment of the practioner to wise and prudent action in a practical, concrete, historical situation." (p. 190) In other words, the values are paramount.

Research, as well as curriculum practice, is conceived differently by the reconceptualists. Willis reminds us that *objective* evaluation does not exist in either quantitative or qualitative studies. The evaluator brings personal funds of meaning and values to the research task. (Willis, 1978) The collaborative researcher recognizes that and tries to be as explicit as possible in the naming of those values.

MacDonald poses two fundamental value questions that inform and form the human condition: What is the meaning of human life? How shall we live together? (Willis, 1978) These questions of meaning and social relations lie at the heart of curriculum research when that research is grounded not in a technical understanding of curriculum but in an ethical and aesthetic one. (Huebner, 1975a.)

Grumet explores the ground of the term 'research' and discovers some interesting tensions within it. The word 'search' is derived from the Old French **cerchier** which in turn is related to **circus**, **circle** in Latin, and **circare**, to go round. "Add the **re** - and we have the temporal dialectic of intentionality and reflexivity, a hermeneutic circle of the soul, ever enlarging its self-story." (Grumet, 1985, p.8) From the 1400's on, however, 'search' takes on a public, intrusive and corrective function as in customs searches, blasphemy searches in the church, etc. "Our current reliance on the term as a knowledge producing process is undermined with this theory of public scrutiny." (ibid. p. 8) This tension between open search and public scrutiny points to a real issue for the qualititative researcher:

> "If my work permits the teachers I work with to examine their own work with a seeing that is more inclusive, that surveys an ever-widening surround, that is a search I would gladly join. But if my work certifies me, as an agent of the state, to peer into what is hidden from public view, if it is my look that discovers and appraises, ...they ought to demand to see my warrant before they let me in." (ibid. p.9)

I have felt this tension in this research project. On the one hand, I was not surprised to see all the power issues which surfaced in the teachers' journals. On the other hand, I was disturbed by the potential consequences of making those public. My research was sanctioned not only by the teachers but also by the institutional managers whose decisions were exposed by the teachers' words. In addition, the teachers trustingly shared their experiences and I feel the weight of my responsibility in deciding which of those words to share in what contexts and in interpreting their words, often, I am sure, in ways other than they might have done had they had the time and circumstance to continue the reflective process we began together.

Writers such as Freire (1970), Giroux (1981) and Apple (1979) are particularly concerned that research increases our awareness as to the hegemonic functions of schooling. Apple (1978) sees a danger that,

> "...in revealing the dynamics of specific educational situations, personalistic, qualitative studies run the risk of not fully interpreting the connections with the social, political and economic world in which educational processes are embedded. He urges authors to ensure that they go from "the psychological to the social, and from the social to the politico-economic and then dialectically 'back' to the individual." (ibid. p.493)

In that qualitative research is a search for meaning, for making sense of an educational world, Mann seeks out models for disclosing such meanings. He suggests the researcher is interested in discovering embedded ideas concerning the nature of knowledge, the processes by which it is acquired, the values associated with knowledge and the status of knowledge in relation to other attributes. (Mann, 1978, p. 83)

> "The models employed to disclose meanings in phenomena are not the result of operations upon data, but are rather the results of extensions, transformations and deployments of intuitively held personal knowledge." (ibid. p.86)

In this study, I was interested in the personal knowledge held by a specific group of teachers. In keeping, however, with Grumet's ethical concerns for the researcher's relationship with those who hold that knowledge, I turned to the action research model engaged by Carr and Kemmis for their understanding of the value of action research.

> "Much teacher action is the product of custom, habit, coercion and ideology which constrain action in ways that the teachers themselves do not recognize, as ways in which they would not deliberately choose if their sources in custom, habit or coercion were recognized." (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 189)

The teachers frequent responses of "I can't explain it but I know," and their tendency to answer questions with tag questions (i.e." It's like so, isn't it?") spoke to me of this personal knowledge that was there but not yet revealed to them in such a way that their choices could make use of such knowledge.

Educational research, from this perspective, seeks to reveal that which enables teachers to have choices. It does this by engaging the interpretive categories of teachers in the systematic development of their own understandings, "both in the context of the practices themselves and also in the context of explicitly sharing and examining those understandings through communication between collaborating action researchers." (ibid. p.188)

In this research, the process by which one comes in touch with *currere*, a process developed by Pinar and Grumet (described in more detail later herein) was extended in the manner of action research to enable participants to take the insights gained from our autobiographical reflection back into our daily practice where we then continued to reflect individually and collectively on the evolving meanings of the personal knowledge created through the *currere* process. As a researcher, I was thus a facilitator of the collaborative process and a recorder of the collective process of transcendence (Phenix,1975) or going beyond. The values underlying my research include those Phenix calls the "qualities of life associated with transcendence": hope, creativity, awareness, doubt and faith, wonder, awe and reverence (ibid. p. 330-331) Those teachers who volunteered to join me in this journey did not, I believe, do so in some abstract interest outside of themselves but rather "as a personal venture which, quite aside from its social benefits, is worth doing for its direct contribution to one's own self-realization." (Mooney, 1975, p.176)

II. Currere

'Currere' is the Latin infinitive from which the word <curriculum> is derived. (Pinar, 1978) How fitting that Pinar should choose a verb for this "method of cutting through to preconceptual experience". (Willis, 1978, p. 316) For only verbs can express ongoing activity in a language. This Latin infinitive means literally 'to run the course'. "The course becomes subsumed in, though not reduced to, the experience of the runner." (Pinar, 1978, p. 518). "*Currere* refers to my existential experience of external structures." (Pinar and Grumet, 1976, p. i) Curriculum as lived is a personal experience. Pinar and Grumet describe *currere* as a strategy devised to disclose this existential experience "so that we may see more of it and see more clearly. With such seeing can come deepened understanding of the running and with this, can come deepened agency." (ibid. p.viii) They make use of autobiographic reflection, Grotowski's theatre and hatha yoga to penetrate the public masks which keep them dissociated from their experience. Questions are used as 'surgical instruments' to cut through accretions that are the culturally-conditioned and hence superimposed answers." (ibid. pl. viii) The thesis of this work is,

> "I don't know, and I must study and search. I must be open to my experience, open to others' and be willing to abandon what I think in the face of what I see." (ibid. viii)

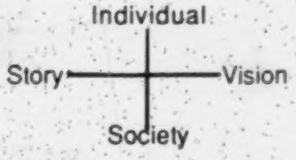
Pinar and Grumet see four basic steps in *currere*. The first is regressive and involves a freely associative remembrance of the past. The present is excavated through focussing on the past, through working to get under the everyday interpretations of one's experience and to enter that experience more deeply. The second is progressive and asks one to ponder the future meditatively in order to uncover aspirations, to ascertain the directions in which one moves. The third is analytic and seeks an intuitive comprehension as well as a cognitive codification of what has been revealed in the first two steps. "I work to get a handle on what I've been and what I imagine myself to be, so that I can wield this information rather than it wielding me. The beginnings of agency." (ibid. p. ix) The fourth stage is one of synthesis, of choosing what to honor now and what to let go, of choosing again who one inspires to be and how one wishes one's life history to read, a determination of social commitments and a devising of strategies.

Whereas *currere* is an exciting work, it is not intended to be a comfortable one.

> "The autobiographical process is designed to create dissonance, to dislodge the comfortable fit of self-as-object, self-as-place, self-as-agent, for where there is a neat complicity between these three, there is no movement, personal or professional." (Grumet, 1976:75)

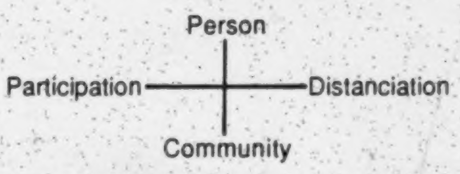
The tools of *currere* are artistic tools which act as critical mirrors to provide "fleeting images of the self which are transcended at the very moment of their fabrication by the artist who is always free to repudiate past works and extend himself into new forms." (ibid. p.75)

In trying to situate one's experience and the reconstruction thereof, certain tensions emerge. Although only an individual experiences, the individual lives in a shared world. Experience happens somewhere within this tension between individual and society. In addition, there is a temporal struggle between story and vision. Experience locates itself somewhere between historicity and creative projection of a future. The locus of experience, as an abstraction, could be portrayed as follows:



I. The Locus of Experience, Abstract

An attempt to reconstruct experience could be said to be subjected to the same tensions and, in addition, the abstract 'individual' of the reconstruction is an actual person and the abstract society is now one or more actual communities of such persons. The situation of a person between a story and a vision is one in which the person must, in order to reconstruct the experience, both participate fully in it but also distance her or himself from it in order to see it anew. So, the locus of actual reconstructed experience adds another set of tensions to those of the abstract locus of experience:



II. The Locus of Actual Reconstructed Experience

In summary, the work of *currere* is the work of real persons laying claim to their experience in new ways both alone and in dialogue with others in a rhythm of backwards and forwards. It seeks not to be coldly objective nor sentimentally subjective but rather to be *meaningful* to the context of the person(s), place, and moment.

III. Doorways to Currere

Where does one begin this rhythmic probing of self-in-the-world? Grumet and Pinar begin with autobiographical work in the form of narratives but they recognize the limitations of a conceptual form (language) in trying to reach preconceptual layers of experience and so turn also to theater and meditation. Whereas the work Pinar and Grumet did with currere involved intensive reconstruction of one's educational autobiography in order that they might better understand from whence came their own educational stance and practices, this was not realistic given the time the teachers were able to commit to the research. I therefore took the intent of currere, namely, to understand more deeply the sources of one's lived meanings of learning and teaching, and chose three "doorways" to currere:

A. Story Workshop
    1. story or narrative
        a. autobiographical (written)
        b. oral
    2. theater exercises

-designed to bring experience to form as metaphors

B. Journal work
C. Conversation or dialogue

In that participation is an important aspect of this type of research, I did not want to impose research processes on teacher participants but rather to invite them to make use of those which presented themselves most fruitfully to them. I explained, therefore, the ways these tools might be engaged by the group and I negotiated with them the ways and extent to which we would use them or variations which they might suggest. As it happened, the stories we had prepared for the story workshop were successful in opening up the kind of reflective questioning I hoped would happen throughout the research, but the work with those stories filled the day we had allotted to do both that and the theatre work so we left the latter for another day. When we did do the theatre workshop a few weeks later, some of the teachers had a real discomfort with bodily expression and everyone was quite tired so people did not appear to get much out of the exercise. Whereas that was somewhat disappointing to me in that I know how valuable a doorway such work is, it also made me realize, yet again, that I had expected to cover a lot more ground than was reasonable to expect in the course of one research project. It was the first of many realizations that research was about capturing a "moment", not a "day" in one's journey.

A. STORY OR NARRATIVE

1. Autobiography

Gunn (1982) gives us an immediate sense of the rhythm of autobiography in her description of the two impulses of autobiography: one to assemble and one to dismantle. Contrary to the classical theory of autobiography as the self writing, Gunn asserts that autobiography begins with "the cultural act of a self reading" (p. 81) Both the reading of the "author" and the reading of the "reader" take place by selves moreover who *inhabit* worlds..." (p. 9) In the bringing of experience to language, one self achieves and acknowledges its *bios*. (p. 9) In the bringing of another's words to meaning for a reader, the reader does the same. For both writer and reader, autobiography is an act of identity formation, not a mere record, but an active process of creating what is and can be.

A hermeneut[illegible]f restoration, Gunn says, looks at autobiography from three angles of the autobio[illegible]ical situation: impulse, perspective and response.

> "The *impulse* arises out of the effort to confront the problem of temporality and can be assumed operative in *any* attempt to make sense of experience. The *perspective* shapes autobiographical impulse by bringing it to language and displaying it as narrative surface; it is informed by problems of locating and gaining access to the past. The *response* has to do with the problem of appropriation and the reader's relation to the autobiographical text. All of these moments (or angles) are levels of interpretation and

> part of a world characterized by finitude and historicity. Only within such a world can understanding take place. As the principle mode of experiencing the world, finitude and temporality do not stand in the way of our understanding but make way for it." (ibid. p.13)

The *impulse* as I understand Gunn's use of the term, lay in the willingness of the teachers and myself to commit ourselves to the search for a deeper understanding of what we do and why. Our journal work and conversations allowed the perspective we took upon our work to surface and we then were able to give names to some of our experiences which had not previously been clear enough to name. Our responses took many forms as we decided what to tell and what to leave silent, what to respond to in the words of the other and how, what to comment upon anew in rereading the journals and what to let rest. For all of us, it was not easy to gain enough distance from our words to better see the source from which they came but it was most difficult for those of us unaccustomed to reflection. It then became my role as researcher to enable that delicate balance between gaining enough distance to see our words in a larger perspective but not so much distance as to lose the sense of power which comes with naming our immediate, personal world of experience.

After the initial meeting with the whole group of teachers in the program and the volunteering of four teachers, Ann, Gerta, Pat and Elaine, the first event in our working together was a one-day story workshop which I suggested and to which they agreed. I asked that they each prepare a few days in advance of the actual workshop four stories, preferably typed, each of which spoke to their experience of an E.S.L. student or students they had taught. Someone asked if they should be about four different students or four stories of one student. I said that was up to them. I made every effort to be open to their interpretations of the tools I offered and to changes in process as those changes appeared appropriate. I prepared my stories as well.

In that the journals, which we had agreed would be one of the most central forms of the research process, are highly individual, I did not want to explain to them in overly great detail how they were to be written but I did want participants to have some understanding of what reflective writing was about, of the value of critical questioning, and of what could be gained by looking at our own words, individually and collectively, to find metaphors of our practice, themes of our experiencing, and visions of our creating. This was the purpose of the story workshop, that participants would find value in their own words, value they had not known was there, and in the words of their colleagues. I knew that collectively, we had much to learn from our own experiences and I wanted to set that tone at the beginning of the research process; a tone of excitement and curiosity to see what would come next.

The story workshop proved to be both an exciting and an exhausting day. I felt successful in that the teachers were happy and eager to embark upon this process. Our conversation gave me confidence that they could see value in questioning and that they accepted that a good conversation could be an open one in which, rather than finding pat solutions to problems we posed, it was alright to let our questions yield even more questions. Following our work with the stories, in which we identified our own themes and those of one another and discussed many of the ideas and quandaries the stories presented, I gave them information about the journals and the intention thereof and they wrote their first journal entries in two of three categories, all of which are described further on in this chapter.

The teachers responded very positively to the work we did with their stories and asked, upon conclusion of the workshop, if I would be willing to give them written response to their stories as they found value in that but felt there was too much to think about all at once and it would be easier to have some of those thoughts in writing where they could ponder them over time and respond to them in that manner. This I agreed to do, remembering that I had greatly appreciated the written response I got from the professor who had first done this kind of work with me.

2. Oral Narrative: telling a story

The spoken word bears all the meanings of the written and more, for it is more immediate. In our search for levels of meaning beneath the conceptual, the spoken story is a notch closer for we have less time to consider our words in speaking than we do in writing.

The spoken story was the primary mode of education in many pre-industrial societies where there was no system of writing. Children sat at the feet of their grandparents envisioning the images projected by the powerful words of their community stories of life and death. The story-teller was an important person in such a society. Like an artist, s/he painted the scene in which the tale would unfold. In his/her eyes, gestures, and tone, s/he projected meanings far beyond the referential value of the words spoken. The speaking breathed life into the words. For the listener, there is a distinct advantage to hearing a story over reading one.

Likewise for the speaker, there is a difference. When Grumet had a summer class work together on our stories, she had each person read aloud the stories they had written to the other members of her or his small group. Similarly, in the Progoff Journal workshops, participants are given opportunities to read aloud from their journals. The facilitator explains that they are not reading aloud for others but for themselves and that others will continue on with their own work. These people have seen the value of naming, aloud in one's own voice, the world of our experience.

I saw oral story-telling as another tool or doorway in this research process and offered it as something we might do the day of the workshop and in our group conversations. People were, for the most part, uncomfortable with the idea the day of the workshop. Their attention was on the stories they had written and they wanted to discuss these rather than tell other stories. (The exception to that was the inevitable telling of one's stories which is triggered by hearing someone else's stories, a process in which the collective ownership of many experiences becomes obvious.) It is, however, a different experience to write a story than to spontaneously tell one. I have some favorite stories that are better told orally than in writing because the timing and emotion are easier to convey verbally. I told one such story on the day of the workshop and the participants were very moved by it and wrote in the journals of the value they had drawn from it. They did not, however, have oral stories of their own they wanted to tell at that time.

In writing or speaking, there is often more meaning conveyed than that which is to be found in the meaning of the words themselves. Merleau-Ponty argues that quite apart from the referential value of words, there is "an affective tonality, a mode of conveying meaning beneath the level of thought, beneath the level of the words themselves." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973: xviii) This thought speaks to the preconceptual layers of meaning sought in *currere*. I find this affective tonality more easily apparent in spoken story than in written, although it is there also.

One technique I used for eliciting oral stories was one I had learned from staff at the Native Survival School in Saskatoon. It is a technique they use to promote language development in their students. They call it the "medicine bag" and use it in their Sacred Circle activities. The medicine bag is a powerful image and well-chosen, I believe, to represent one's lived stories because medicine is associated with healing and I have found the telling of stories to be a healing process both for the teller and the listener. In this particular exercise, the facilitator brings a bag of several carefully chosen objects which are intended to elicit those memories that each person associates with the objects. The bag is emptied into the circle, wherein rules for trust, confidence and participation have already been proposed and agreed to by each participant. Participants are given a few moments to peruse the objects and find one which seems to have a strong attraction for them. Then they are encouraged to pick it up and, one by one, each individual tells the story of what that object reminds her or him. I have been involved in this experience several times now as both participant and facilitator and each time, I expect more than one person to want the same object. The objects I placed in the bag were objects from my own intercultural experiences as well as relatively ordinary classroom objects. The advantage I see in this technique is that the teller is so absorbed in the recounting of the memory that there is no time to filter his or her words in the same way one would with a written account, in which one might ask: What am I supposed to write? How will the others receive this story? Will I have to defend my point of view? etc. Oral story-telling is a much more immediate experience and the objects are merely triggers for memory.

B. Theater Work

> "...*currere* has projected itself into the world in the forms of autobiography and theatre. The thread that runs through our use of both forms is the assertion that curriculum development and innovation do not require a revamping and reorganization of the schools, of instructional methodologies or of the academic disciplines but a transfer of our attention from these forms themselves to the ways in which a student uses them and moves through them."

(Grumet, 1976, p. 68)

Whereas autobiography is a process of dialectical reflection, the theatrical process is dialectical action designed to challenge the individual to confront her or his habitual responses and to develop the capacity for their very antitheses. (ibid. p. 70)

Theatrical activities are used very commonly in development education with adults living in situations of oppression. They are less common to most adults in Canada but are nonetheless fun. Perhaps it is because we associate drama with play and therefore with fun, that we allow our childlike selves to emerge and once again, leave our "analyzers" on the shelf to a large degree.

Theatrical activity enables us to contact the knowledge possessed by our bodies.

> "If *currere* was to reveal our conceptual inclinations, intellectual and emotional habits, mime would reveal the knowledge that we have in our hands, in our feet, in our backs, in our eyes. It is knowledge gathered from our preconceputal dialogue with the world, knowledge that precedes our utterances and our stories." (Grumet, 1978, p. 305)

The specific exercises I proposed for this study are referred to as metaphor sculptures in popular theater. They are first done by individuals who are asked to complete the sentence, "As a teacher, sometimes I feel like a __________" and model that with their bodies. When each individual has done that alone, the small group is asked to help that individual to make a group sculpture for each person's metaphor. The sculptures can move but they are wordlessly created and wordlessly enacted. Following such an activity, time is taken to talk about the experience.

The other activity is also a sculpting one but is structured as problem-posing (Barndt, 1982; GATT-Fly, 1983). Teachers are asked as a group to wordlessly create a sculpture which portrays the experience of being E.S.L. teachers. Each person is given the opportunity to step out of the sculpture and examine it. Then the group is asked to create a sculpture portraying what, in an ideal world, it might be like to be E.S.L. teachers. The same examination procedures follow. Then, they are asked to reconstruct the movement which took place between sculptures one and two. This is the point at which, in my past experience, the insights seem to come most strongly. This is the point at which many people realize that they do create the world in which they live and can therefore make changes, especially as a group. It was this problem-posing sculpturing experience which yielded the most valuable insights from my perspective. In it, the group saw their individual isolation and their yearning to face the challenges of their work as a community. They expressed a desire to stand up, to make eye contact, to gather as a circle and to join hands. It was a moving experience for us all.

As mentioned previously, our work with the oral story-telling and the sculptures, excepting the aforementioned, did not yield the fruits that the written work did but I have included them in my descriptions of doorways for two reasons. They were used in this project and they are, from previous experiences I have had, good ways of surfacing people's personal experiences such that they can explore them and bring them to a level of consciousness which enables more choices than they had before. That they were less effective here than they were before, I attribute both to the fact that this was a small group and I normally use them with larger groups and, secondly, that the group felt like they were on mental overload. The intensity of the journal work combined with the already present stresses of both their work life and their home life operated against being able to absorb anything more.

I would also have to raise the possibility that my relationship to the other participants which was sometimes colleague and sometimes outsider may have influenced their response to me taking on the role of facilitator. We are unaccustomed to relating to one person in new roles that would not normally be played by the same person.

C. Journal Work

A journal is, among other things, an instrument of personal growth wherein one may record not only the events of one's life but also one's experience of those events. Over a period of time such a journal can enable its author to see patterns and connections which might otherwise not have arisen and to raise questions which might otherwise have lurked always beneath the surface.

Ira Progoff developed an approach to journal keeping which he called the Intensive Journal Workbook. (Progoff, 1975) Originally developed as a therapeutic tool, it is "specifically designed to provide an instrument and techniques by which persons can discover within themselves the resources they did not know they possessed." (ibid. p.10) His journal approach is one of opening, both inward and outward. It is based on the premise that individuals have within themselves the resources they need to be the creators of their own lives rather than the "victims" thereof. The task is to find and free what Progoff calls the élan vitale. The many sections present in this method do not stand alone and apart but have a cumulative effect, "like many streams feeding into one river which draws their energies into itself and flows strongly out to sea as a unitary force." (ibid. p.35)

Progoff's journal consists of a record-keeping dimension, a life-time dimension, a dialogue dimension and a depth demension, each of which has several sub-sections, wherein individuals can work at a more symbolic, intuitive level.

In this research project, some of Progoff's techniques were adapted to the keeping of a research journal which was offered to participants as another tool with which to "make meaning" individually and as a group. The big difference between a research journal in this instance and the kind of a journal Progoff teaches is that the latter is strictly private and confidential and the former is, by necessity, shared by two people with one assuming primary responsibility for the content and direction of the conversation therein, namely, the teacher. Whereas there were several ways in which it could have been set up, I suggested the use of only three sections in that to have done otherwise seemed overly complicated given the kind of time I thought they would likely have to do the journal work. I suggested a main section of the journal into which the teachers would write every night, if they so chose. That section might include a brief log of the major events of the day along with the stories or anecdotes which stood out as significant and would also include their written dialogues with myself in which together we questioned the meanings of their experiences and their relevance to the research question being asked. In this section, they expanded on ideas which had come up in the group conversations or in any other sphere of their daily life which seemed relevant. I also described to them the sections Progoff refers to as Now the Open Moment and Journal Feedback.

Now the Open Moment (Progoff, 1975, p. 285) is normally the last part of an Intensive Journal Workshop led by Progoff or someone he has trained to lead such an event. Progoff describes this section:

> "When we began the workshop we took the last part of the past as our starting point. We marked off the unit of experience that immediately preceded the present moment in our lives. It was the contents of this period that we described with our first Journal entries in the Period Log.
>
> Since that time we have no longer been in our past, but we have not yet entered our future. While we have participated in this workshop, we have been at a mid-point of time between our past and our future. Everything that has transpired in our life prior to the workshop is over is our future. Our Journal Workshop is the quiet place in between the two. Being here, we have been protected, at least temporarily, from the outer pressures of our life. We withdrew to it as a Sabbath in order to give ourselves an opportunity to reposition ourselves in the movement of our lives as a whole. In the terms of our metaphor, for the duration of the workshop, we went down into the well of our lives to work in the deep places of the underground stream. And now, as our experience of the workshop comes to a close, we return to the surface of our life again. We come up from our well ready to go forth into the movement of our lives again." (ibid. p.285)

The Journal Feedback section was one in which I invited the participants to periodically reread their own journals and reflect yet again upon what they and I had written there, to reflect in the new context of the time which had intervened since they had written and to look for the patterns or connections which might be found over a longer period of time. These were recorded in a separate section at the back of the journal, as were the entries in the section called "Now the Open Moment".

One of the participants, Ann, had attended some of the Progoff workshops and was very comfortable with the whole process. She especially used the Journal Feedback section to advantage in trying to find a larger picture as she re-read our entries. She, more so than the others, used all three sections of the journal as I had suggested them. The others used them less often and with less content although Elaine obviously understood both and recorded some especially poignant insights in both of the latter sections.

I discussed with the participants what the frequency of the process would be and it was agreed to leave that to the individuals. I came in every day and, if they had done a journal, would give it to me first thing in the morning and I would respond to it and return it to them before I left, usually around noon. If they had not had time to write, that was fine. Ann was most prolific in her writing and submitted many pages almost every night. Elaine was also very regular and filled her journals with the stories of her students and her emotion-filled appreciation of them and what they offered her. Pat and Gerta were reasonably regular and less prolific in their journal work. Gerta missed several evenings towards the end when she was under a lot of stress in her life but did her best to contribute what she could when she was able.

A very important part of the research process was the keeping of my own research journal. Since I am as interested in the *process* of coming to deeper meanings through currere as I am in the meanings to which we come, and since I was the primary facilitator of this process, it was essential that I take a very self-reflective stance throughout the project. By recording our conversations and reflecting on them, I hoped to see more clearly the ways in which I truly facilitated meaning-making and the ways in which I inadvertently hindered or distorted it. I hoped my journal would be a tool with which I could catch my own errors and seek to address them with the group. I also encouraged the teachers to be reflective of our processes and to comment upon, question, and note those in their own journals.

My own journal, while kept faithfully during the ten weeks of my working with the teachers, was not always what I expected it to be. In it, I recorded my insights, decisions, new questions and doubts. I used it as an emotional release naming my fears and frustrations as well as my excitement over developments I saw as significant. Outside of the ten weeks, I did not always have the binder with me which I had used for the journal and I found myself often writing on lined paper which I dated and filed. I now have several folders of such papers, some more legible than others in that my desire to write my journal often occurred at very inconvenient moments, such as waiting at an airport or driving the car. (I did not attempt to use the Progoff format although I do myself have four binders in which I have kept a journal following the Progoff format, albeit with my favorite sections. I tend to go into that journal in a more intense fashion, spending two or three days in it when I enter which is not often, maybe two or three times a year.) In Chapter 5 of this dissertation, I have drawn together some of the more significant reflections from the research journal I kept during this process.

D. Conversation

Apple (1978) cautions those engaged in autobiographical research forms to beware of stopping with the narrative and not making the necessary connections between one's experience of the world and the social, economic and political structures which ground that experience. Conversation amongst research participants is a way in which individuals can see not only how their own experiences and insights compare with those of their colleagues but also a medium in which they can challenge and help one another to extend their meaning-making beyond their individual experiences to the social framework from which they emerged.

Currere has a practical interest in its search for meaning. Habermas distinguishes between 'speech' in which people talk about their practice and 'discourse' in which people examine the comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and rightness within their practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.191) Conversation seeks to be 'discourse' rather than 'speech'.

Conversation with participants is an attractive research method,

> "...because it is a natural form of interpersonal discourse and because it tends to break down the social distance between the researcher and the participants, sometimes giving rise to the hope that they might possibly become co-researchers in the project." (Carson, 1985, p.1)

I very much liked Carson's recognition of the definite possibility that those who appear to be participants may very well be unwilling or unable to participate at the level at which we would desire, namely that of co-researcher. I cannot say that any of the four were not, in moments, co-researchers, I could say that Ann most often shared my questions at a level of experience and of questioning similar to my own. I could say that Gerta's ownership of the question seemed limited by the constraints of the personal circumstances in her life but I believe there were moments when all of us were claimed by the question and eager to pursue understandings which would free us to become better teachers in this context.

The weekly conversations we had as a group served many purposes. Being held on a Friday afternoon, the only common time we could find, we released our fatigue and frustrations from the week and most often, I felt responsible for providing the energy and focus to return to the research questions. The conversations were not the center of our process, in the final analysis, but served to bring us together to share the experience and to refocus the questions for ourselves as we worked with them. By far the most exciting conversations were those in which we came to understand the notions of freewheeling and starting points, two notions described thoroughly in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. In those conversations, each person contributed the understandings which had been building in the journals as well as other stories which contributed to our developing of these two very important notions for the curriculum in which we worked. It was in these conversations that I truly saw the potential of genuine conversation for moving us forward towards "the good" in our practice.

Conversation is an art in which we can experience the hermeneutic circle spoken of by

Gadamer which alternates between explanations of "the way things are" and a questioning of the basis of this knowledge and the application of it to human life. In this rhythmic process, conversation becomes a hermeneutic activity in which we interpret our world and make meaning within it. A hermeneutic tradition allows the questions we bring to conversation to become themselves questionable. (ibid. p. 4) Here we can distinguish between a problem-solving approach and a problem-posing approach. In the former, there is a problem in search of a solution but the solution is limited by the way in which the problem has been defined initially and, because that is not normally questioned, the options for action are very limited. A problem-posing approach recognizes that problems and questions are themselves grounded in conceptual frameworks which can be questioned, interpreted and re-formed.

What may have been somewhat different in this study (at least within the E.S.L. field) was the opportunity to take the insights, themes, questions and problems which emerged from the autobiographical work and to observe in a systematic way how those informed the on-going practice of participants in their daily teaching. Whereas the journals enabled participants to reflect on that process individually and even dialogically with me, the group conversations provided a good opportunity for a community of practitioners to pose and repose the questions of meaning within their work. The place of the teachers in relation to their work was very different at the end of the study period than it had been before it began. They had found confidence in being able to come to name what they were doing and why.

Conversation, according to Gadamer (1975) is the art of questioning, "of being able to go on asking quesions, ie. the art of thinking." (p. 330) In engaging questions and answers with another, it is important not to try to win arguments with the other but to really consider the weight of the other's argument. To question is to lay open, to place in the open. The beginning of a question is the awareness of not knowing and the desire to know. Since it is more difficult to ask a question than to answer one (ibid. p.326), in the conversations with the teachers, we needed to consider the value of coming up with good questions in addition to progressively deeper explanations for our experiences.

A conversation moves us along in the direction of a question. To do that, it must consider the opposites within the knowledge under consideration.

> "Knowledge is dialectical from the ground up. Only a person who has questions can have knowledge, but questions include the antitheses of yes and no, of being like this and being like that." (ibid. p. 328)

Thus Grumet, in her response to student stories, puts forth the antithesis to what the student has written as thesis. These antitheses confront the students to examine their positions more clearly. Such confrontations are not always comfortable and need to be set in a context of acceptance of the other as a person of value and, in the context of a common quest for understanding. So it was important in the conversations with the teachers that some initial ground be established for mutual acceptance, respect and trust from the beginning. There is less opportunity for genuine dialogue where there is fear.

That I felt more comfortable in my responses to Ann, Pat and Elaine than I did to Gerta may have a great deal to do with the fact that she and I had not known each other before the project began whereas I had worked with each of the others before.

IV. Timeline for the Research

The span of this research has, from start to finish, been about six and one half years due largely to the circumstances of my life which limited the number of large blocks of time I could find to work only on this project. The work with the teachers, however, lasted for ten weeks, that being the length of time a teacher was with one group of students in the institution where the study was done. I have stayed in close touch with Ann throughout the entire length of the research and have seen Pat and Elaine several times over the years. I have spoken to Gerta two or three times on the phone since she changed jobs.

A timeline is given below to give the reader a sense of the various aspects of the work in relation to one another.

Oct. 26, 1986:	Letter to department head explaining nature of research and requesting permission to work with those teachers who might indicate interest at a staff meeting wherein I would again explain it and answer questions.
Oct. 28:	Attended staff meeting and described research to staff. Four volunteered.
Oct. 29:	Meeting with participants to negotiate process and timeline.
Week of Nov. 3rd:	Initial conversations between myself and each participant. (Taped 2-3 hour interviews)
Nov 8:	Day-long story "workshop" in which we worked with the four stories written by each participant, discussed possibilities for the journal work and began the journal writing.
Nov. 10:	First day of class with new students. Began my response to the journals.
Nov. 14:	Begin the weekly group conversations. (Also, teachers had their first meeting with the administrators to talk about the future of the "Manual". They were very dissatisfied with feeling unable to express their views.)

Week of Dec. 1:	Conversations between myself and each participant. (mid-term taped interviews)
December 2:	Second meeting between teachers and administrators. This time, they felt very satisfied that they had begun to find their voices.
January 4, 1987:	Gave participants a four-page summary of our group conversations, as I saw them and asked for comments. (Themes and Issues Thus Far)
January 9:	Last group conversation.
Week of Jan. 12:	Last regular conversation-interview between myself and each participant.

V. Issues in Critical Research

A. Validity

The question of validity comes up often in qualitative research. Kelly (1978) suggests that evaluation be seen in its relationship to judgment and to prescription. The values inherent to any piece of research need to be made explicit since, "No accumulation of information can tell anyone what he ought to do." (ibid. p.130) Kelly proposes a three-part publicly reasonable expression of judgment to include a statement of the judgment or verdict, a statement of the reason or reasons for the judgment and a statement of the norm or set of norms that shows the reasons to be good ones. To speak of credibility is to speak of being credible to someone, about something, within some circumstance. Teachers can think about their credibility in relation to their students and to their employers, among others. As Mann (1978, p.12) reminds us, curriculum is a form of influence over persons. Disclosures of meaning in a curriculum are disclosures about the character of that influence.

I made the decision at the outset to judge this research to have been valid, for myself, if it was credible to those who participated in it, and, if it were to strike chords of resonance with the experience of other E.S.L. teachers who have a similar value base to my own, namely, one in which education is seen as meaningful, emancipatory learning activity. Now that I have reached the end of the process, I see another form of validity which is at least equally of importance to myself, namely, my own sense of having moved along in the direction of my question. In the final analysis, I am disappointed in some aspects of the research, disappointed that I did not have more time to spend in pursuing the many distractions and smaller avenues of search as they arose, disappointed that I did not have more time to go back into the literature to supplement my underdeveloped understandings as they began to emerge in the writing up of the data and interpretation thereof, specifically in the areas of social class and patriarchy as they relate to education. However, although it is far from perfect, the work has deepened my own understandings. Wrestling with all the choices I had has made many things clearer to me and I have decided to accept that the dissertation is only one set of steps in my own journey. I have to accept the steps I have been able to take in the time and circumstance I have had. With that decision, I have a personal sense of validity about what I have been able to do and I look forward to now seeing whether my criteria for validation from the participants and from other teachers will also be met.

B. Ethics

1. Personal Knowledge

Grumet cautions those who work with personal knowledge to develop an ethic for their work which recognizes that telling is an alienation in that it requires giving oneself away. We are obligated, she says, to:

> "...devise a method of receiving stories that mediates the space between the self that tells, the self that told, and the self that listens: a method that returns a story to the teller that is both hers and not hers, that contains herself in good company." (Grumet, 1985, p. 7)

We must inform absention as well as action and leave participants feeling assured of the value of their lived experiences as they are, Grumet reminds us.

It was a great struggle for me throughout this process to determine what the most ethical choices were for me. It began with fears surrounding the honesty with which the teachers expressed their feelings about what was happening in the institution. A couple of them left their journals in their desks overnight. What would happen if the wrong people read them, I wondered. We discussed it and most of the group decided to take them home at night, even if they did not have time to write. I wrestled with how much of my own experience to share with the participants as I did not want to totally distort the meanings from which they were teaching but at the same time, it was participatory research and I felt it necessary to be as much a participant as they were and to ensure that I gave them in the same spirit of generosity that they were giving to me. Later, in working with the data, I questioned what could be safely said and what needed to remain silent, for the well-being of those who had trusted me with their stories and feelings. I have also struggled with my interpretations of the material, feeling on one hand the need to be true to my own sense of what is going on but on the other hand, reluctant to say things which may in any way hurt the feelings of any of the participants who so trustingly opened themselves to this process. I have tried to walk a middle road which does justice to the dignity of the persons named herein (albeit with pseudonyms) while at the same time not water down the essence of what is going on. Only time will tell if I have been successful.

2. Dissemination of Research Data

MacDonald and Walker (1977) raise some other ethical issues, one of which is control over dissemination of the knowledge created in the research. I have taken care to protect the teachers. In that Ann was the most outspoken in her comments, I have stayed in touch with her and read aloud to her aspects about which I was doubtful of including. Her willingness and outright insistence that the most sensitive material be included has reassured me that I am on the right track. MacDonald and Walker also raise the issue, in action research, of whose interpretation is considered valid. I have also tried to be as clear as possible as to which interpretations are mine and which belong either to the group as a whole or to individuals within it.

I accepted a personal responsibility to each participant to see that she or he leaves this research project at least as confident and able as when she or he entered it, preferably more so. I asked a great deal of these people. I expected to give a great deal to them and to see all of us get much of value from one another by way of support and encouragement, insight, respect and challenge. It has been exciting for me to realize that I can be a 'culture-maker' (Freire, 1968) and I have every reason to believe that it was so for the others, to some degree.

C. Role of the Researcher

> "It is the ambition of currere to provide students with the tools of critical reflection that they will need to transform their situations, whatever they may be, to take the objectivity, that they are given and to create yet another objectivity from it. In the process of currere, the situation becomes my situation. The criticism that liberates must be my negation that arises out of my experience. Ultimately, only I am responsible for what I do with what I am given." (Grumet, 1978, p. 296)

Is currere education or research? It is both and the researcher has the double role of providing the research tools and of recording what is done with them. To the extent that participants are able and willing to create estrangement from the familiar, they too will take on these roles. As a facilitator of this process of coming to personal knowledge, I have offered antitheses, where I could see them, to their theses, "not to invalidate their experiences but to stimulate a dialectic that would lead them to see the limitations that accrue to our experience, the habits of seeing that prescribe the field of our vision." (ibid. p. 298) As one who is also learning and who believes that, to the degree it is possible in a doctoral research, co-participation is desirable, I have also opened myself to being challenged in this way. Ann was one who did not hesitate to tell me when she thought I was out in "left field". I very much appreciated the candor with which she challenged me and responded with such honesty to my many questions.

D. Participation

This was, for me, problematic throughout this work since there is a tension between the requirements of a doctoral research dissertation and the requirements of emancipatory forms of research in which participants share in all aspects of the research from defining the problem or question, to deciding upon a process to distributing the knowledge which is generated by the research. There is a continuum between authoritarian research forms and participatory ones. This study is, of necessity, placed upon this line of tension between two extremes since the question has already been shaped by me and I have invited people to join me in its asking. In addition, the requirements of a dissertation as I understand them have also limited in many ways the extent to which I can truly invite total participation. I believe I have gone as far towards co-participation as the contingencies of the situation have permitted, which is not to say that such boundaries are fixed and will not and should not be extended by future researchers.

SUMMARY

Participants in this research project have sought to reveal dimensions of meaning within the practice of E.S.L. teachers of adult immigrants. This has been done in the belief that teachers' experiences can be better, fuller and more meaningful and that teachers themselves have the resources to make them so. The tools of the research process were tools of empowerment quite different from most of the research tools of my past experience which themselves have acted in ways to maintain the social relations of the status quo. In this research process, a small group of interested teachers were given the opportunity and the tools by which we were able to work together to flesh out the meaning of what we do. My role was to facilitate and to record that process as it happened.

D

Chapter 4

THE INTERPRETIVE JOURNEY: TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE, TEACHING AND POWER IN THE WORDS OF THE TEACHERS

Introduction

In this chapter, we are afforded what was for me an extraordinary journey into the lifeworlds of the four participating teachers in this study. In the words of their daily journals, we glimpse not only their experiences but also those of the learners with whom they work. We begin to understand why, in spite of the frustrations and conflicts they experience, they mostly love the work they do. In the research process, we see them struggling with the questions which we ask one another, questions to which we may have thought we knew the answers until they were asked:

> What is language?
> What does it mean to teach these learners?
> What is the nature of the power relationships in this context and how do they relate to our teaching?

The difficulty and the delight of this research process has been the dynamic and multidimensional nature of it. How I have envied, at points, those of my colleagues who chose to research something clearly definable, something bounded in space and time, something which could be measured or otherwise assessed in a straightforward manner. In this study, no sooner did I begin to see clarity in some facet of the questioning than it began to metamorphize before my eyes. Therein lies both the challenge and the wonder. None of us who participated in this study were unchanged by the experience.

I would like to insert one word of caution to the reader. If one reads this chapter expecting to find an exhaustive analysis of the words of the teachers or of the ideas revealed therein, one will be frustrated and disappointed. I felt overwhelmed throughout the process of gathering together and organizing this material, overwhelmed by the richness of it. Tempted to narrow and narrow again, I resisted that urge, for the most part, because, whereas most researchers do look at phenomena in their minute specificity, I wanted to see the forest rather than the trees. So, I would ask the reader to read this chapter as if he or she were a passenger on a fast-moving train, looking out the window at a rapidly changing landscape, having not the opportunity to study any particular feature in detail but coming away from the journey with a good sense of "the lay of the land" and, perhaps, the temptation to return to primary points of interest. In this chapter, we see windows of meaning in adult E.S.L.

Context of the Study

The program in which the study was done has been described in some aspects in the autobiographical reflections section of Chapter 1, as I was one of two people who created the program. For the sake of enabling a better understanding of the context of the words and interpretations which follow, I shall expand upon that context here.

The Special Needs Program had been in operation approximately two years before this study began. Only one of the teachers (Ann) had been involved from the beginning and she was looked to for guidance by the others who recognized that the program was designed to be quite different from others in which they had worked. The program was intended for learners who had limited formal education in their countries of origin; many of these learners were illiterate or semi-literate in their first language. They were learners who, upon initial assessment, were suspected of being unable to cope with the regular E.S.L. curriculum which was highly dependent on written materials and on the ability of learners to move through various linguistic concepts at a normal speed, making use of a typical classroom environment in their learning process.

The Special Needs Program tried to acknowledge who the learners were and where they were in their formal educational development, and meet them in that place. Each class, at that time, had one teacher instead of the two a regular E.S.L. student would have, met in one classroom for the day instead of moving around from block to block, and emphasized the learning of oral-aural functional skills over reading and writing. Teachers saw the importance of building a community of learners who would work together, a situation they saw as preferable to one in which each learner was primarily accountable for his or her own learning, occasionally at the expense of another's learning. The curriculum was built on stories which were elicited in any manner possible: verbally, through art, and through movement and theatre. (Not all of the teachers used all of these approaches.) Teachers were encouraged to let the curriculum emerge from the moment rather than imposing content upon the learners. In practice, this meant that if Kitty came into class with sandals in the middle of winter, one lesson that day revolved around finding out why she was dressed inappropriately, informing the learners as to the dangers of winter weather and the need to dress appropriately, and as to their rights and the procedures for exercising them in regard to settlement finances. The other learners would contribute their knowledge concerning bargain stores, sales, and flea markets. In the ideal Special Needs classroom, everyone was a teacher and everyone a learner.

Power was an important issue because it was the intent of the program to empower the learners in their lives and that began in the classroom. In spite of the pressure of tradition for the teacher to have the power, it was up to the teacher to find ways of encouraging the learners to accept responsibility for naming what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it. This was not easy for most of the teachers nor for the students. Some of the first things the students were taught to say and ask were: "What does _____ mean?", "I don't know", "I don't understand", "Please speak slowly", and "Would you please repeat that?", because these were seen as tools which the students could use to acquire the language they wanted and needed both in the classroom and outside of it. These tools gave the learners a certain amount of power to control their own language learning process.

It is important for the reader to understand that, because this was a new program, and because there was relatively little understanding by the administration and most of the teachers as to the nature of the program and the reasoning behind it, the ideal and the practice were often very far apart and the teachers themselves often recognized that. I believe that at least three of the four saw the research project as an opportunity to grow in their understandings of the nature of the program and believed that this would enable them to be of even greater help to their students, something which they obviously valued a great deal.

In the pages which follow, many excerpts from the teachers' journals reveal a conflict between the teachers and the administration in the institution. This had a long and complex history. I can offer only my interpretation of that and, even then, it is hard to know where to begin because such conflict is not unique to this institution. E.S.L. teachers are, in my experience, a unique and relatively hardy breed of teacher and this is no accident. Unlike other teaching professionals, E.S.L. teachers have little job security and are most often hired for no more than five months at a time, and thus anyone who cannot handle the insecurity of that situation normally does not stay in the profession for long. The size of an E.S.L. department often varies widely throughout the year because the majority of funding for E.S.L. programs is special funding rather than base-budget funding. Some E.S.L. teachers combine this career with other careers which range from waitressing to acting and a few will teach for one or two contract periods and then travel to some other country where they can readily find employment teaching in a refugee camp or foreign language school. I believe it is this lack of job security which results in the vast majority of E.S.L. teachers being women. Most men stay but a short time before seeking more secure employment.

In addition, I believe that because persons of immigrant status in this country are undervalued, so are those who teach them. Administrators in many school jurisdictions are noted for assigning just anyone to teach E.S.L. If a teacher is declared redundant in one school or department, he or she often bumps someone in the E.S.L. area. I do not know of this happening in Western Canadian Community College but it is illustrative of the overall undervaluing of the E.S.L. teacher. Those who have the power to hire and to define curriculum are often persons with no background in E.S.L., persons who often do not appreciate the distinctness of the profession and the need for particular expertise and special personal characteristics to teach it well. These problems are characteristic of the profession as a whole in North America.

In this community college, there was also a history of rebellion in the E.S.L. department. Twice, delegations of the part-time staff had gone to senior administrators to complain about various problems. The instigators found themselves without employment, a feat which was very easy to accomplish in a department wherein people were hired on one short-term contract after another. These rebellions took place in the continuing education section of E.S.L. In the full-time department, two of the five teachers with permanent jobs (at that time, I believe there were between thirty and forty instructors in this department) were also union stewards for the whole college and acted on behalf of staff with grievances. This did not help their popularity with the administration. Anyone without permanent job status was very much afraid to complain as it was the general belief that complaints would be held against a person.

Within the overall E.S.L. area, the Special Needs Program or rather those staff who designed it, were seen by administrators as uncooperative because they resisted fitting what they were doing into the administrative routine as a whole. They wanted their own classrooms for these learners and extended hours with them. Whereas the teachers involved saw that as a curricular issue, the administration reacted as if it were a power issue and sent in an instructor from a different department to, as the E.S.L. teachers reported it, "clean up" the situation and get the teachers "in-line". (This happened after I had left the institution but before the study began.) Her appointment as senior instructor to the program and supervisor of the curriculum development process, when she had no E.S.L. experience or critical understandings of education, was received with great resistance and further alienated a staff who already felt misunderstood and unappreciated. They also felt a lot of fear since two senior teachers had already left the institution in very unhappy circumstances, deemed by most of the staff as unfair, and a third seemed about ready to go.

The feeling of having no power became very relevant to this study in that one of the intents of the program was to empower the learners. How, the teachers wondered often, were they to accomplish with learners what they had been unable to accomplish for themselves?

To complete the basic context of the study, there is one more piece of information needed concerning the administrative structure. The reader will notice that the term "the administration" is often used rather than "the department head", "the dean", "the vice-president", or "the president". I had not given that much thought until one reader questioned how realistic it was to speak of "the administration" as if it were one entity. When I did question it for myself, I realized that indeed, both for myself, and obviously for the participants who speak in the same manner, that is a very significant way of naming the situation. Because there was so much fear and because that fear appeared to extend into the administrative hierarchy as well, administrators were seen as speaking with one voice. The department head did not say, "We have to do this because Mr. X says we must." He said, "This is how we have to do this", with no explanation. Similarly, teachers had found that when they took their grievances to the senior administrators, those individuals defended their junior administrators without any evidence that they had investigated the charges against them and even warned people that their jobs were at risk if they continued to "make waves". Thus, many of the teachers, including myself, came to see the administration as one megalithic, unmovable rock and we ceased trying to distinguish between who was the problem and who was not because they presented a united front. The majority of the teachers in E.S.L. at that time felt that their opinions were not valued.

Profiles of the Co-Researchers in the Study

Ann

The woman referred to as Ann is a highly competent, long-experienced E.S.L. teacher and administrator, who was, at the time of the research, holding a junior supervisory position at the College. She had been the first E.S.L. teacher the College had hired some fifteen to twenty years earlier and had built a department of anywhere up to fifty-two instructors, a number which fluctuated considerably from intake to intake. About three years before the study commenced, she decided she would rather be in the classroom than in the administration and she resigned as department head.

After working with me to create the first two classes in the Special Needs Program, she was also one of the two authors of the two-volume text commonly referred to as "The Manual", a curriculum guide and resource for teachers in the program.

In the time I had known Ann, about ten years, she had changed a great deal in her approach to E.S.L. Trained years earlier in an approach which was oriented highly towards linguistics, she had become much more philosophical and open to a critical perspective in educational theory and practice. As a co-researcher, Ann was very much valued for her integrity, her dedication, her openness, and her genuine questioning. I always felt that the question I was asking was just as important to her as it was to me. Her willingness to dialogue, at length, in the journals opened up many insights for me.

Ann was the only one of the four co-researchers with a permanent position but, in the midst of the study, even that appeared to be threatened when she received a performance evaluation from the dean which said the following:

> "Ms. ______ had developed a somewhat narrow view of E.S.L. and of the institution as a whole. If she is to be successful as a Senior Instructor and continue in this role, a broader perspective is required." (included with Journal, 11/18/86)

Elaine

Although younger and less-experienced in E.S.L. than Ann, the woman referred to as Elaine was an energetic, enthusiastic teacher whose sense of wonder about the learners and about the research was a real asset to me and to us all. Elaine came from a background in special education in the public school system. Her approach to her teaching was an intuitive one and I found myself fascinated that her decisions in the classroom were often decisions that I too would make but that if I asked her why she was making them, she would often look worried because she did not know.

Her love for the students came out in the frequent, descriptive anecdotes which filled her journal. She was not bounded by the schedule of the institution in responding to the needs of the learners but would frequently take a group swimming at a nearby institution or set someone up with her relatives for a holiday dinner.

A newly separated mother of two young children, Elaine was often torn between her career as a teacher and her career as a mother. I am deeply indebted to her for her regular and interesting journal entries, many of which were written close to midnight.

Elaine, like Pat and Gerta, had a sessional position which meant that she was contracted only for the length of time the current students were in the program, namely twenty weeks. With a young family to support, that was a worry for her.

Pat

The teacher referred to as Pat was also a teacher in the public school system before he joined the staff at Western Canada Community College a couple of years earlier. Like Elaine, he was very intuitive in his teaching and had difficulty accounting for his decisions. Of all the teachers, he was the least planned and the most open to the moment in his teaching approach. His classes were filled with humor and laughter and he was well-liked by his students, some of whom called him at home to talk in the evening, which he encouraged as it gave them confidence in their speaking ability.

Pat expressed difficulty at the beginning of the project particularly in naming his experiences, orally or in writing. He appeared to suffer from a lack of confidence in what he was doing even though he believed he was doing a good job and got a lot of support from the learners and the other teachers in that belief. He would often say "I don't know" in response to a question or would answer a question with a tag question (e.g."...., isn't it?") He skipped quite a few journals and sometimes had not too much to say but when he did tell a story, he told it with flair and detail and often described his experiences metaphorically. The metaphors were of special fascination to me because they were usually sports metaphors and, since I am largely mystified by sports, I had first to learn about the sport in order to fully appreciate the metaphor.

Pat, perhaps more than any of the others, grew in confidence throughout the study and was able to name his experiences and beliefs with a new conviction by the end of our work together.

Gerta

The woman known as Gerta in this writing was herself a child immigrant from Germany and, like the two preceding teachers, came into E.S.L. from the public school system where she had taught German and French as second languages. She had been in the department only a short time before the research began and she left it immediately at the end of the intake, having received a job in the public system teaching German and French. She said she wanted the security that system offered to teachers.

I found Gerta the most challenging to work with in that I could not identify with the positions she took in the same way I could with the others. When I questioned something she said in the journal, either I got no response or she would say that I had misunderstood what she meant. I found her to be much more conservative in her teaching approach than the others and I wondered why she had chosen to participate in the project in that she quite often did not have time to do the journal work. In addition, her journals were almost never descriptive or anecdotal in the way the others were. Rather, they consisted of her definitions of concepts and her explanations of why she did what she did in the classroom.

Gerta's involvement in the research was no doubt influenced by a very negative experience she had during that period of time. Someone with an Arabic accent was making obscene phone calls to her home and it took awhile for the telephone security service to identify the person; it was one of her students. She had suspected that from the beginning yet could not prove it and that created a lot of tension for her when she had to go into the classroom and act normally towards this man. Whereas intellectually she was, like the rest of us, able to identify the chaos this man from Lebanon had endured and the likely confusion that had left in his mind, it was quite another matter to handle all the emotions that generated and I could not help but feel that this was also implicated in her decision to leave the teaching of adult E.S.L., although she attributed her decision solely to the need for job security.

I. THE MEANINGS OF LANGUAGE

In that E.S.L. teachers are teachers of *language*, it is important to explore what it is that teachers think language is and how they decide to select which elements of language to teach and which to ignore, given the time limitations of any language program. In trying to understand the lived notion of language from which the teachers taught, those understandings as revealed in the words of their journals, I found five themes. The first theme is the teachers' theoretical stance toward the meaning of language. The second is the frequent body of references to "real" language which is seen as separate from that language which is staged for the classroom. The third is a rich collection of words which reveals the many things we do in language. The fourth looks at the relationship between language and self and the fifth at those elements of communication which are experienced as somehow being more than language as we commonly think of it.

A. Theoretical Understandings of Language

In this first theme, I have gathered together a series of journal entries in which the teachers talk *about* language in some way. Most of their references to language appear to come from the first two columns of the chart in the table in Chapter 2 although they also clearly see the shortcomings of these ways of seeing language. The first view of language, which I have called language as form, is one in which language is seen as a system of structures (grammar) into which we place content units (vocabulary and pronunciation). We see this understanding of language reflected in the two entries which follow:

> "We give them a framework (i.e. grammar) so that they can plug in more vocabulary, structures, into the basic framework, piece together information without us!"
> (Gerta's Journal, 25/10/86)
>
> "I made sure (the student) was near the end (of the repetitions) so he knew the pattern and could do it."
> (Elaine's Journal, 19/10/86)

In Gerta's entry, we see a mechanistic view of language, a view not unlike that expressed by Elaine with "patterns" and "repetitions". Elaine later refers to giving the students "vocabulary so they can label their new world." (Journal, 24/10/90) Labels are also pieces which can be appropriately inserted into an existing structure.

In spite of a tendency to fall back on these old understandings of language, which theoretically this particular program rejects, all of the teachers realize the shortcomings of a purely structural view of language which tries to make everything logical. Elaine points to the inadequacy of trying to explain the language logically: "We help them to realize that English is a difficult and crazy language and therefore not to be upset when it doesn't always make sense." (Journal, 24/10/86) There is nothing in a traditional grammar of English, for example, which would enable a learner to understand and make use of the many idioms in the language, for example, or of sarcasm in the usage of words.

A second way of understanding language is to see it in terms of how it is used, the functions of language. In a functional understanding of language, the structures are contextualized within the context of usage, as we see in Gerta's example:

> "Language is anything your body does in order to make the meaning of the thought clear to the target person.... It is a *tool*, however clumsy, of bringing our thoughts to another person's attention." (italics mine, Journal, 11/25/86)

In the following, Pat's words point us to the shortcomings of both the structural and functional conceptualizations of language. He takes us a little further, into the realm of meaning and relevance:

> "I don't think you can 'train' low level students to learn English. You can train them to imitate words and easy sentences but there's a good chance there will be no meaning attached to the words. Students acquire language when the language is practical and relevant--language that enables them to participate in Canadian society." (Journal, 7/12/90)

Pat's understanding that language is more than words and sentences, that it is rooted in context, explains some of the frustration many teachers experience in using workbooks which are largely American and often irrelevant to the lived world of the learner here in urban Alberta, Canada. He distinguishes between the learning which results in parroting meaningless phrases and the learning which enables one to participate in the society, a participation which requires an ability to communicate in the dominant language of that society.

Elaine points us towards the conceptual nature of language and the difficulty posed when learners are trying to move from a language with one body of concepts to one with different ways of conceptualizing reality:

> "It's a different "ah-ha!" for a student who has heard of something and is asking the English word than for a student who has never seen or heard about it ... before. In a way, maybe it simplifies it because they are learning the information in one language and the knowledge is new and exciting. On the other hand, I could sense the feeling of security when they came across something or some idea that they had a word for in their own language." (Journal, 10/25/90)

There are several significant items in this comment of Elaine's. First, is the awareness that language is a naming of concepts and that concepts are not easily translatable from one language to another. While I was working in the north some years ago, I learned that the Slavee Indians, for example, did not categorize a white urban teacher with their own elders or storytellers (the educators in that society) when it came to finding a word to name what we commonly call "teachers". The literal translation of the word for teacher was, I was told, "paper house man" which described their understanding of a person who spent his time in a house filled with papers. Their naming indicates the meaninglessness, to them, of that which we refer to as "education".

Secondly, Elaine raises the question of the difficulty in learning those words or expressions which name conceptualizations not found in the first language. This points to the value of the teacher having herself or himself attempted to learn a second language. One who has had this experience can begin to understand the nature of difficulty facing a student who is having to reconceptualize reality while learning a second language. Seldom, however, is that experience considered to be a necessary qualification for working in the field.

In the last part of the previous entry, Elaine also refers to the place of security in language learning, a notion which is recognized in the third column of the chart in Chapter 2, the school of communicative competence in E.S.L. It is in language that we feel the security of knowing who we are. To be uprooted from that nest of knowings and feel ourselves placed in a seemingly unbound space of shifting sand beneath our feet where meanings move and slide about out of the learner's neophyte control is to experience, in the beginning, something akin to terror.

Language is not only problematic for learners but can be so for native-speakers as well. Ann makes several comments about the difficulty of communicating with administrators within the institution itself. If people who speak the same language, in theory, have difficulty communicating, we must ask ourselves what it is about the nature of language which allows that to be so. We can see in her comments that the meanings we attach to words are influenced by the values, beliefs and experiences we bring to hearing those words:

> "We must find a way to communicate with (administrators and teachers) who have different values and styles."

> (Journal, 10/14/86)
>
> "We need someone who understands us (the teachers) and can translate for those who don't." (Journal, 10/14/86)
>
> "The same person who wanted an externally imposed structure before she taught in (this program) and a course outline, is now speaking our language.... She's already moved so far that she can no longer speak (the administrator's) language." (Journal, 12/2/86)

Ann's remarks have, from my perspective, an importance to this study for two reasons. The obvious relevance is in the suggestion that those responsible for making major program decisions do not understand what the teachers are trying to tell them about the program, which causes a good deal of upset to those trying to teach within it. Although their mutual conversations are happening in English, Ann nonetheless sees a need for translation and notes that after teaching in the program, someone who had formerly opposed it now spoke their "language and can no longer speak the administrator's "language". This would seem to imply that word meanings go far beyond that which can be looked up in a dictionary.

The second area of relevance which arises out of her comments has to do with a tendency, on the part of most teachers, to view E.S.L. from the vantage point of one class and one historical and political value system, namely that of the middle-class, since it is to this class that the vast majority of E.S.L. teachers belong. Is it possible for such a group of teachers to teach people of diverse races and histories the language which will best serve their interests in this society? Would it be valuable to begin to recruit as teachers competent speakers of the language from other cultural and historical perspectives who might enrich not only the possibilities for the learners they teach but also for the other teachers with whom they work?

B. Real Language and Classroom Language

[illegible] real language, we mean language found in genuine interactions as opposed to language which is introduced to the classroom solely for the purpose of teaching a lexical or grammatical unit. I recently witnessed a good example of a teacher's setting up a communicative situation in which "classroom English" was used by the teacher rather than "real English". He pointed to the first item on a poster of possessive pronouns and asked a woman to make a sentence. She said, "My child is sick." I, sitting to one side of her and being accustomed to real language in my own classrooms, said, "I'm sorry to hear that." The teacher simultaneously smiled and said, "Good!" to the woman, who looking quickly at us both, seemed confused. Then, she laughed and, turning to me, said, "Me no children." What does it mean when a childless woman tells us her child is sick and the teacher smiles and says, "Good!" (It is also interesting to note that whereas her classroom English was correct, her real language ("Me no children.") was not.

In this program, the teachers are also aware of the difference between language which is real and that which is not and they value the former. Pat tells us:

> "I want real language but I realize that with new students it's hard to get. I am always ready to utilize real language whenever an opportunity comes up in class. I don't think there is any lesson I wouldn't stop to make use of 'real" language." (Journal, 11/14/86)

In this entry, we see the difficulty of having real language situations when the learners have as yet learned so few words. In another entry made later in the program, he finds it getting easier:

> "They have enough language to feel confident to try to communicate. Many of our discussions now are genuine, not contrived. They really have something they want to say." (Journal, 1/13/87)

Elaine finds this distinction even in the way people listen to one another:

> "I'm so pleased at how most of them are really listening to each other and agreeing or disagreeing---asserting themselves." (Journal, 11/19/86)

We see a good example of such disagreements in the following passage from Elaine's Journal:

> "...they argued on Tuesday. Yesterday they were at it again. A said that Dep had said "F___ you!" in Vietnamese. Dep said no. (A said this several times very loud.") (Journal, 1/28/87)

One of the great frustrations for E.S.L. teachers occurs when students insist on speaking their own language instead of English. This is frustrating for two reasons. First of all, they are not learning English when they are speaking their own language and secondly, the teacher is left out of any discussion which occurs in a language she or he does not speak. Elaine's students agreed to speak only English in the classroom "except for the coffee break!" (Journal, 11/12/86) What this says to me is that the students were willing to "play" at English in accordance with the rules of the classroom game but when it came to really talking to one another, they felt they had to do this in their own language. Ann tells us how frustrated one teacher felt at being left out of those conversations:

> "(The teacher) says (the students) want vocabulary and structures introduced and drilled. If there's anything real or meaningful to communicate, they do it in their own language and leave her and the others out." (Journal,

> 12/10/86)

Language has the power to include and to exclude. As teachers, we also do not like to feel "left out".

Real language is often spoken of as functional, practical language:

> "Hoa has cold feet so we discussed socks. I suggested wool socks." (Elaine's Journal, 11/19/86)

> "For the first time (at week eight of the ten-week class), Efrain decided to write something down---the complaint letter to his landlord. He's the guy that has refused to write very much." (Gerta's Journal, 1/12/87)

When students are asked to participate in communicative activities which are not seen as real, there is sometimes resistance or boredom, both of which result in little participation. Gerta tells us about one of her students who refused to do what he was asked to do: "One fellow never started Ten Steps so I finally asked him why; he said he didn't believe it would benefit him. He doesn't like the stories." (Journal, 1/8/87) (Ten Steps is a workbook of short writings which the students are asked to manipulate in a variety of ways such as changing the writing from third person to first person or from the present tense to the past tense. For the analytical learner, it is a way to learn the connections which must be made between the various grammatical components of the language. This student obviously demanded something different of that on which to spend his time.) The stories were not meaningful or interesting to him and he resisted working with them.

In Pat's journal, we see a very typical example of the communicative competence approach to E.S.L., a school which I find still lacking in real language in most circumstances:

> "This afternoon, we did our first dialogue, one that reviewed much of what we had done thus far. It was the first time I had my students work in pairs, a good chance for me to stand back and observe them." (Journal, 11/13/86)

Dialogue normally refers to a conversation between two or more persons. As a classroom exercise, it is written by a third person in order to teach two or more others how to say things in the language of instruction. Ann shows us how such "dialogues" are used in the classroom: "Then (Pat) handed out dialogues and had (the students) repeat them chorally...and then asked them to practice the dialogue together (in pairs)." (Journal, 11/27/87) Whereas a dialogue is normally seen as a conversation two people enter into, this dialogue can be "handed out", "done", "observed", "repeated chorally" and "practised." The relationship between persons engaged in a meaningful creative interchange is lost in this notion of dialogue. The dialogue has become instead a tool employed by the teacher acting on the students who can choose only to participate or not participate in being thus acted upon.

Whereas several entries imply that real language is something which either comes up or does not, Elaine describes a situation in which she "engineers" real language in order to get the students to practice describing a person. She arranged for a substitute teacher to steal her purse and then she herself came into the classroom asking where her purse was:

> "Everyone got very excited. Actually, it was interesting....They were so excited that they used their hands entirely. They understood my questions. I eventually got them to verbalize. I said I would go look for her....I (later) put my arms around (the thief's) shoulder and said "friend". They all laughed." (Journal, 12/2/86)

This is an unusual example because it is unreal in the sense that her purse had not really been stolen but it was real in the moment when the students thought that it had.

In the next section of this chapter, in the documentation of the teachers' meanings of teaching, there is a description of "freewheeling" which was seen by the teachers as a highlight of their classroom experiences. It is included here because the term is used to describe situations in which genuine language activity occurs:

> "They learned (the information on) their personal flashcards but they couldn't "freewheel". By this I mean they couldn't seem to ask any question that was formed by their own thinking and curiosity. The language I heard from them was very predictable." (Pat's Journal, 11/14/86)

> "Had a good day. Had Mary in in the afternoon and had a great time. Students really got into the lesson (did a description thing with Mary as the mystery guest)---After Mary answered questions from the students. The questions period went very well---the students started to 'freewheel'---almost all of them. It's this thing about confidence and an atmosphere conducive to spontaneity." (Pat's Journal, 12/4/86)

> "I think the freewheeling really worked because the students, Brad, and myself were really interested in what was being said." (Pat's Journal, 1/7/87)

> "Today, I was with Heather and Debbie's S.N.2's for a teaparty. They were "freewheeling", making language, making meaning. I wish (the supervisor) could have been there." (Ann's Journal, 12/2/86)

From the above, it appears that the teachers accept a common set of meanings around "freewheeling": language emerges from the real thoughts and questions of all participants; freewheeling happens when people feel confident and secure in expressing themselves and when the speakers are creating meaningful expression in the language. Freewheeling is being real in a language in a spontaneous, dynamic manner.

In reading all of these passages concerning real language, one thing becomes apparent: real language emerges from genuine and meaningful interactions between persons. Elaine's students are concerned that she is missing her purse. The Polish student wanted to converse with the senior citizens. The Vietnamese students wanted their teacher to know what the argument was about. The two students who exchanged recipes had found a common ground between their two worlds. And those students willing to speak English except at the coffee break were willing to play the game of language learning but not at the cost of real conversation, which they did not see happening in the classroom.

C. Language as Doing

In reading through the journal entries, I became fascinated with the range of verbs used to describe various forms of language activity and I wondered if teachers were conscious of the depth and breadth afforded by these words in the planning of their own daily curricula. In language, we relate to others; we accomplish tasks; we express ourselves. I have thus chosen to group those verbs and verbal expressions I found in the journal entries into three categories: language as it reveals relation to the other, language as functional tool, and language as it expresses one's own experiences, ideas and emotions.

Speaking and writing are language activities; they are "doings" and if we are to teach language as activity, it makes sense that we should endeavor to become more conscious of the nature of that doing as we find ourselves in the artifacts of our own words, the words we use to describe our experiences and our reflections thereupon.

1. Language as it Reveals One's Relation to the Other

In our opening encounter with the other, we greet that one, address him or her, and get his or her attention before we begin to converse. So we see in Pat's journal:

> "Walked into the room again and said 'Good morning'---
> only a few responded so I said it again, this time more
> emphatically. I got their attention." (Journal,
> 11/13/86)

Having a person's attention, we then proceed, in language, to get to know the other, to evaluate and judge elements of that other's being and doing. Again, in Pat's journal, we read:

> "Worked on names as the students were settling in....

> Generally, I spent the time in the morning getting to know my students---their listening comprehension and speaking ability." (Journal, 11/12/86)

Even as items of the lexicon can be said to label things and concepts within a language, so is it also used to label people, which can be problematic. In reference to Gerta's time in Germany, she writes:

> "Thus I spent two months retraining quite a few people emphasizing the fact that I am Gerta Smith, not a "Canadian", "Edmontonian", etc." (Journal, 1/26/87)

Gerta wanted to be seen as an individual identity, not to be judged on her geographical or national background. To what degree do E.S.L. students in our classrooms also experience themselves as being judged not by their individual being but by their race, language or country of origin? Gerta later writes of a student who became labelled as *a problem* "because he refused to do any written homework." (Undated journal entry located with January, 1987 material.) Not only did she see him as a problem but so, she writes, did the other teachers and students. She relates that he was punished by not being promoted to a higher level at the end of the first ten weeks. In this case, the labelling of the student as a problem would appear to have averted the teachers' inquiries into why he was refusing to do written homework and how they might have responded to this in a way which enabled rather than disabled his language learning. Just as Gerta wanted the Germans to keep getting to know her as an individual personality, so did her student insist on being treated as an individual. Whether or not he knew he was labelled as a problem is irrelevant; he refused to fit into the role which had been prepared for him as a "good" student. His label as a problem student enabled those in power over him to feel justified in excluding him from learning opportunities of his own choice.

It is in language that we are drawn into relationship with the other or group:

> Gerta: "I even saw (the students) talking to each other in English. A couple times today they *drew me into* their conversations. i.e. asking how old I am, married, single, etc. (Journal, 11/18/86)
>
> Elaine: "While we were talking in English, John listened and basically understood but when it was all Vietnamese I didn't know what to do about John. I know he *felt left out.*" (Journal, 11/26/86)

In both of these instances, through the language spoken, a person is included or excluded from a group. In Elaine's account, it is interesting to note that whereas neither she nor John understood Vietnamese, she was concerned about his feeling left out while making no reference to having any such feelings herself. This points to her awareness of the enormous feelings of insecurity one experiences in being outside the cocoon of one's known, comfortable language network. Elaine was firmly surrounded with a language familiar to her such that moments of incomprehension were no threat to her. She knew, however, of the discomfort the Polish student was feeling in the company of all the Vietnamese students.

It is difficult to think of human relationships without thinking also of power. Language and power are closely related in numerous ways. On the surface, we use language to persuade, as we read in Elaine's words: "In the afternoon, Margot came into my room. I talked her into it." (Journal, 1/9/87) To "talk her into it" was to exert influence or power over her. There is also power or influence in being able to name our world in a way that satisfies us. Pat writes:

> "Had a meeting after school with (the supervisor). I *had a lot more to say* (italics mine) about S.N.'s than I would have had one month ago. Must be the result of our project." (Journal, 12/12/86)

Before that time, Pat had expressed frustration in that he felt like he knew what he was doing but could not explain it to anyone else. He could not find the words and so found himself saying little and feeling upset with that.

The language a person uses to express his or her experiences can move the listener's emotions, another form of power. Elaine writes of those stories which I read aloud in our preparatory workshop: "I almost cried listening to your stories." (Journal, 11/8/86)

Communicative interaction between persons can seem to take on a life of its own and move everyone with it. Elaine writes: "If I'm doing an activity and the students start questioning and it goes in a different direction---I go with it." (Journal, 11/20/86) This is an interesting surrender of power on the part of the teacher to the moment as Elaine could have chosen to redirect the activity but she did not; she went with it instead.

Language carries a tone and creates an atmosphere. Such ingredients of our emotional atmosphere normally play a significant role in determining our manner of relating to those around us:

> "We went to a tea party in Room 704. What a nice warm, friendly, atmosphere. The room was *buzzing*." (Elaine's Journal, 12/2/86)
>
> "Haimonot, A and Dep were *chatting*." (Elaine's Journal 1/27/87)

Words like "chatting" and "buzzing" create in our minds a "feel" for the positive atmosphere or tone of the gatherings described. In contrast to the liveliness of these two references, we read Gerta's "When the conversation started *dying out*---(italics mine)" (Journal, 1/4/86) Again, we have this sense of the language activity as having a life of its own which we can only choose to "go with" or to interfere in. If we were to ask ourselves what it was about the conversations described in the last entry which enabled the writers to describe them in the way they did to convey that atmosphere. I suspect it would not be the vocabulary, the grammar and the pronunciation which they would describe but rather the expressions on people's faces, the other's body language and the speed and tone of the voices. Are these elements part of the E.S.L. curriculum? Can they be? Should they be?

There were concrete references in the journals to body language as communication and also to the importance of the level of language in communicating to new speakers of a language, as we see respectively in the two passages below:

> "During the last 20 minutes, we sat around and talked about holidays. They didn't speak Vietnamese but I glanced over and saw Hoa's hands going like crazy to Hien. We joked about her "other language." (Elaine's Journal, 11/28/86)

> "It was interesting eavesdropping on Margot. She had never been in this situation before. She initially talked "regular" and the students just sat there but after about 10 minutes, she had changed her level of language and she was communicating with them." (Elaine's Journal, 1/9/87)

Both of these examples remind us of the complexity of the communicative act. In the face of such complexity, I cannot but question the common tendency to reduce the teaching of language to four language skills.

In summary, we have seen that the teachers and their students *do* many things in language. As human beings, we relate to one another: we include or exclude; we get people's attention; we label our world and, when that includes people, those labels can alienate or uplift. Through the power of our own voices, we wield power over others and/or are dominated by the power of others over us. Through rhetoric, we can move people's emotions and establish a climate which is conducive to good relations amongst people. We can enhance the quality of our communication with others by being conscious of the meanings conveyed in body language and we can alter the degree of complexity of our communication so that it is comprehensible to persons who have varying degrees and kinds of experience in the language. In that the teachers have said all of this, indirectly, in their words, ought we not to be conscious also of these things in our teaching of English as a second language? Such teaching goes beyond functional pragmatics to the taking of some responsibility for enabling the immigrant learner to have much more power over creating the quality of human relationships which would serve his or her interests as well as those of the community as a whole.

2. Language as Functional Tool

In that language is so commonly seen as a tool for communicating, for surviving, it was fascinating to me to find that, in the journals there were so few references to purely pragmatic (as opposed to personal relationships and self-expression) language use. Our E.S.L. curricula are most often built upon the assumption that people need to shop, go to the doctor, find and do jobs, answer the telephone, and speak to their children's teachers, for example. The English one needs to do those things is referred to as functional English. For example,

> "To lead up to doctor's appointments, I polled them as to what language their doctors and receptionists spoke. Only one had to deal with a unilingual, English-speaking receptionist. Some had dealt with bilingual receptionists, some had family members who made appointments, some had never been to a doctor and two went to doctors who didn't require appointments." (Ann's Journal, 11/22/86)

What is astonishing in this reference is Ann's discovery that what is in every basic E.S.L. curriculum of any length (namely medical terminology and language for making medical appointments) is, perhaps, not language that many of the students will ever use. Our curricula, while theoretically designed around the needs of the students are, in fact, designed around our life experience as English-speakers which can, if the above is to be taken as indicative of any pattern, be substantially different from the life experiences of those who do not speak English in their families and larger communities. Immigrant learners are able, often, to meet their needs in ways other than through the English language and, furthermore, do so. Ann raises for our consideration the need to question those glib assumptions we make as educators about the language needs of those we teach and to inquire as to the reality of their life experience.

3. Language Which Expresses One's Personal Experiences, Ideas and Emotions

From reading the teachers' journals and from the interviews and conversations we had as a group, I learned that the joy the teachers experience in teaching E.S.L. has a great deal to do with what they learn from the students' stories about their lives. The teachers are enriched by the students' expressions of their life experiences, their ideas and their feelings. Through these stories, some painful to hear, the teachers seem to be drawn into an experience of the humanity they share with the learners:

> "...they started talking about when the Americans bombed Vietnam. A said she was 15 when 4 of 8 people were killed in one day. She said they had to pick up the pieces." (Elaine's Journal, 12/2/86)

> "We started talking about wages and they started talking about wages in Vietnam and the cost of food. All the English deteriorated into Vietnamese. There was so much emotion. I felt they were getting a lot off their chests." (Elaine's Journal, 11/26/86)

There is so much in the second passage preceding. Elaine probably began the discussion from a practical perspective: students need to know their rights as workers in this country. The students in her classes, however, have a lot of freedom to pick up her lesson and carry it where they want to go; in this case, they seem to have wanted to express their anguish over low wages and high food costs in Vietnam. Elaine is willing to let them take care of their emotional needs while in the classroom, something not all the teachers were willing to do, as we will see in the section on power later in this writing. I find her use of the term "deteriorated into Vietnamese" interesting and somehow disturbing. What does it mean for an English speaker to see as deterioration a conversation transformed from their own language to another?

When given the opportunity, students bring their very real problems and dilemmas of the present into the classroom. One student driving without a license was involved in a hit and run accident. He was terrified to learn that someone had taken the license number of the car he was driving, a car which happened to belong to his friend. In telling Elaine about all this, he lacked sufficient language to communicate the tale sufficiently and an interpreter was brought in:

> "Everything (the student) said was true. What he didn't get across (before) was that it was a hit and run and someone took the license number. His friend is going to take the rap." (Journal, 11/24/86)

The language needed to describe this situation is not the kind of language one can build into a prepared beginners' level curriculum before the course begins. Elaine, however, took advantage of the opportunity to talk about it when the need arose.

When participatory educators want to tell other E.S.L. teachers about the S.N. program and how valuable it is to elicit stories from the learners, the teachers often respond by saying beginning level language learners do not have enough English to tell their stories. We then proceed to tell them how wonderfully creative those learners can be in trying to express their feelings and experiences:

> "We were talking about Haimonot having a nice husband. Hoa said, 'Haimonot---BINGO! Sometimes BINGO, sometimes, no BINGO.'" (Elaine's Journal, 1/16/87)

I asked Elaine what this was about and she gave me an oral response indicating her understanding that Hoa felt Haimonot had "lucked out" with her husband while she (Hoa) felt sometimes lucky and sometimes unlucky with her own. (They had been playing the BINGO game in the classroom to learn the numbers so, for the students, it was a word meaning "good luck".) Many such metaphors are used when students do not know the right words or find that the words they do know fail to have the impact they desire. One student told her a long story of being in love with her fiancé and then finding him and her girlfriend in bed together at the friend's house. She went home and overdosed, and then spent four days in hospital. The next time she saw them, she drove into them with her car. No one was seriously hurt. In trying to tell all of this with minimal vocabulary, she used a lot of gestures and described her anger as "Fire inside." (Journal, 1/16/87) Some teachers would find it incredible that a student at this level would be able to communicate such a story to the teacher, but this one did, I suspect because her teacher genuinely wanted to listen and appreciated the student's need to tell.

Elaine's journal is filled with stories her students have told in the class, stories about their tragedies, their triumphs, their joys, their confusion in this society. If the stories were not so real, and so filled with pain, I might have thought they had a "soap-opera-ish" quality to them but, real they were. That Elaine's journal was so filled with stories whereas the others were not, was partly due to the time she spent on her journal but also indicated to me the value she placed on having the relationship she did with her students. For them to feel comfortable relating those stories in the classroom spoke not only of their need to do so but also of her appreciation of their need and of respect for them as whole human beings rather than just "students". They entrusted her with their stories and because they knew she appreciated them, took the risks and the time needed to find ways to tell them.

D. The Self and Language

In the previous section, we saw the teachers using language in forming relationships with others, in expressing their experiences and emotions, and in use for various other purposes. It is also in language that we form our understandings of the self. We learn that we are lovable and capable, or that we are not. We feel powerful or we do not. We feel part of a community of people or we feel isolated. Under the overall heading of "The Self and Language", we look at three sets of entries from the teachers' journals: references to the relationship between language and self-esteem; references to one's experience of ownership of the language and to the sense of power that brings; and references to feeling a sense of belonging as it relates to language.

1. Language and Self-Esteem

Pat often expressed a lack of confidence in his own language abilities and his sense of not wanting to take the risks of expressing himself in situations where his self-confidence was at risk. He was somewhat apologetic about the stories he did at the beginning of the research project, feeling that they were not as good as those of others:

> "When I started to write the stories, I felt that I didn't have much to say about the students. I guess I did though. I really don't know what a good story is---I guess for me it is a story I enjoy and one I can relate to in some way. A good story is made even better by a good writer. That's why I enjoyed your stories---your style was good." (Journal, 11/12/86)

The use of the words "good" and "bad" in relation to our language use has raised many questions for me in this research. A student who is learning the language is often described in the community as a person with "bad English". This together with Pat's description of a "good" story and his lack of confidence in his own, causes me to wonder about the psychological impact of seeing one's languaging as good or bad, both terms which are applied in relation to the value someone or something has in society.

A lack of confidence in one's language abilities is often used in the journals in conjunction with teacher descriptions of frustration and lack of power to affect changes they see as needed in the systems in which they work.

> "Went to meeting at Winnifred Stewart. Meeting was long and I didn't say anything. Hope someday to have something to say at such meetings. I feel there is a major communication problem at (this institution.) ---Top administrators seem most interested in protecting their jobs." (Pat's Journal, 11/12/86)

"To have something to say" in this instance indicates having confidence in naming one's experience in a way which would be acceptable to others and thus have some power to move those others to different understandings. To be unable to name one's experience thusly is experienced as frustrating. This experience of being unable to name one's experience came up in three of the four teachers' writings and is discussed in greater detail in the section on power.

Part of having confidence in saying what one has to say is believing that what one says is acceptable. Elaine says of Gerta's stories: "Gerta was so so conscious of making her stories sound right." (Journal, 11/8/86) To say what will be accepted and to name one's experience are not the same thing. To have been so obvious about it, it would seem that Gerta communicated to Elaine not her ideas and stories but rather her lack of confidence in herself at the time of writing. Language communicates more than what the words say.

The following passages show us the students' fear and shame in trying to enter into a language experience with which they are still very unfamiliar. There is risk and embarrassment in the experience, as we see in the four passages below:

> "(Today we compared) eight languages. Some students learned that Arabic is written right to left, and that Tigrina and Arabic do not have a written alphabet. Some students felt pride in their own language, admiration for others. *But the student who couldn't write much Malayalam was ashamed.* It didn't help much that we figured out that Malayalam isn't necessarily taught in schools. What did he learn today? And what did the others learn from his experience?" (Ann's Journal, 11/24/86)

> "Mary works with a much higher level of students. She was sort of stuck on accuracy. Even if she understood the question, she had them put it exactly right if it wasn't. *They soon stopped asking questions.*" (Elaine's Journal, 12/3/86)

> "I dropped off Dung's I.D. card to be retyped and then at 9:30 I asked him to go pick it up. Dung, who is outgoing in class, was very hesitant. *He went anyway but came back without the card.* I went down with him and he got the card." (Elaine's Journal, 11/26/86)

> Gerta: "The class went very well. The only thing out of the norm was speaking to Agizicszka Marion in German after class."
> Virginia: "What did it mean to both of you to have this conversation?"
> Gerta: "It meant that we could talk about things we couldn't do in English, yet...in retrospect, it was a mistake. *They often had a tendency to fall back on German because I could understand them.*" (Journal, 11/14/86)

The problem of students speaking their own languages while trying to learn English is one which arises often in E.S.L. teachers' discussions. To fall back on something is to return to something safe, dependable and supportive. To express oneself in a new second language feels neither comfortable nor safe. The path of greatest ease is to return to one's mother tongue whenever the situation allows.

Elaine notes that even the tone of voice changes as the learners become more confident in their abilities in the new language:

> "The feeling I had was that Le and Lien (new students) hadn't talked much before and they felt comfortable trying out the words. When we started they spoke quietly and shyly and as we moved along, their voices became firmer and surer." (Journal, 11/17/86)

Pat gives us an interesting insight as to why some students might be more comfortable with the mechanical language of workbooks than with the real language of human interaction.

> "I have learned that real language needs an atmosphere in a class where students feel good about themselves and their class. They must feel that they can take a risk and not feel embarrassed in front of the class." (Journal, 11/14/86)

That we tend to be more willing to speak when we feel that our communication will be both understood and accepted suggests that our classrooms need to be places where there is a high degree of trust not only between students and their teachers but also amongst the students themselves.

2. Ownership and Power

Language is sometimes referred to as something which can be owned or "had" and in that ownership, we have a sense of the owner's power. I am reminded of the notion of cultural capital. Gerta writes:

> "...their overwhelming desire to have what I have (i.e. English) is a terrible responsibility." (Journal, 1/26/86)

In this entry, we see the teacher accepting a large measure of responsibility for enabling these learners to "have" what they do not currently have but need: language. In another section of her journal, she writes about the need to have "a good grasp of the language" and says that "...without an excellent command of the language...I wouldn't be able to survive." (Journal Feedback, 1/26/86) The word "grasp" again gives us a sense of language as a thing to be owned, to be held onto. The word "command" gives us a sense of the power inherent to the one who possesses the language. Both of these words call forth an image of language as a weapon with which one can face and conquer the world.

Ann also sees language as something one has or does not have as she describes her frustration in being unable to name her beliefs about what teaching E.S.L. ought to be like and about her consequent lack of ability to persuade decision-makers to proceed accordingly. "I still don't *have* the language to talk about my emerging vision." (Journal, 1/8/86) In these words, we hear the frustration, the sense of powerlessness, about not having sufficient words to precisely convey the ideas such that the listeners would be persuaded to the viewpoint of the speaker. Ann is a native speaker of the language. If she feels thus handicapped, we can only wonder at the sense of helplessness which must be experienced daily by beginners who have no choice but to relate to their new environment in a language in which they cannot convey their experiences, ideas, needs or feelings with confidence.

Ann also uses the term "ownership" as she describes the difficulty of making acceptable corrections to students' halting efforts to express themselves in the new language:

> "I would have preferred to have much more time on the stories and to have done the first (and maybe only) draft in their (incorrect) English, for they didn't own my sentences at all." (Journal, 12/15/86)

(Ann had written in correct English the meanings communicated by her students in incorrect spoken English.) Ann felt that all the work which had gone into eliciting and transcribing the student stories was largely irrelevant because the students themselves did not identify with the words she had used to record their ideas. They did not even recognize them as their own thoughts. Either the ideas had changed in the transformation to writing, or, the language used to record them was too unfamiliar for them to grasp all at once as they attempted then to read these same stories. One of the dilemmas in teaching English in a way which honors the learner's knowledge and experience by making them the center of the curriculum is that of never being totally sure that you have understood the meaning before you give them the words they need to express that meaning.

Language, as it is discussed in these passages, is something which, when we "own" it, gives us a sense of power in acting on our world.

3. Belonging and Not Belonging

One's sense of self is determined to no small degree by one's sense of the community or communities to which one feels a sense of belonging. The teachers' writing included anecdotes and commentaries on their own sense of community or lack thereof with students and with the administration. In those entries, we see the role of language in creating the sense of belonging or not belonging.

When a class first begins and the learners do not know one another, there is always the tendency to group together with others who speak the same language. Gerta wrote that one of her classes was very unsettled. I asked her what an unsettled class was and she replied:

> "(An unsettled class is one in which there were) language cliques forming, indifference to other class members, selfishness---people coming, going---students unsure of the value of the content because it doesn't flow from one day to the next." (Journal, 11/17/86)

The S.N. program was initially conceived as one in which the importance of building community amongst all participants in a class was recognized. In the class Gerta describes, there is no sense of community save between those who speak the same language, which she describes as cliques. In that context, she says, the curriculum does not flow.

Similarly, Elaine describes her need for a good relationship among the students:

> "If one student dominated the group to the exclusion of others, I would question this. The participation must be in consideration of others which goes back to the idea of "bonding". (Journal, 1/4/87)

Students who dominate classes by talking too much, by interrupting or ridiculing other students are the scourge of the classroom. Often good relationships just happen among the students but sometimes teachers have to work at it and, if that is to happen, they must see the value in doing so, which Elaine does. (Her reference to bonding was one brought in by an administrator, and would appear from her use of the quotation marks, to be a term with which she is less than comfortable. The S.N. program designers spoke of the need for community. This was "translated" by the administrator into "bonding", a term he felt more comfortable with but which the program designers disliked. There is a vast difference between the two worlds of meaning within which the two terms occur and that is representative of the kind of difficulty faced by those who would bring forth new ideas.)

Ann suggests there is no dialogue possible if one does not have a good relationship with the other or others. As a junior-level administrator and teacher, she felt obligated to make senior management aware of the special needs of the students in her program. When she got a very negative performance evaluation from a supervisor who said he considered as unacceptable her narrow view of E.S.L. and the institution as a whole, she became very discouraged and wrote: "And for now, I guess I have given up on (this supervisor) and see dialogue as impossible." (Journal, 11/20/86) Communication happens between those who have some common ground of understanding. If that is not there, communication becomes impossible.

E. Language Plus

Particularly when the teachers talk *about* language, they tend to see it as words set in grammatical structures, those words conveying meanings to an intended audience. Such words convey their theoretical understandings of the nature of language, in addition to which, we have seen their distinction between real and classroom language and the value most of them place on the former; we have looked at many of the things one *does* in language and we have looked at the relationship between language and sense of self. This last section, "Language Plus", gathers together those passages which appear to point beyond the teachers' theoretical understandings of that which they teach. We look at their experience of para-language phenomena as revealed by their journal entries, at language and style, silence as meaning, and at those problems surrounding the teaching of language which stem from context and from the act of putting language into practice. Lastly, we look at some teacher comments regarding the relationship between intent and understanding and the naming of the experience of successful communication.

Elaine's journal, in particular, is a monument to her determination to understand and be understood by those learners with so few words yet present to them in the English language. She engages these learners with her whole body:

> "When I look into each person's face, I want each person to understand what is happening and to be interested and excited by what's happening." (Journal, 11/12/86)

I love this passage because, in it, we see the usually not mentioned other side of communication, communication as listening, as reading the other. She puts the onus on herself as listener to understand and be understood, rather than holding the speaker accountable for whether or not she herself understands. One big difference I have noticed about English speakers receiving speakers of other languages and those same speakers receiving English-speakers into their languages is exactly this difference in the locus of accountability. When I was in Latin America, seldom did I feel humiliated by my infantile attempts at communicating in Spanish because most people tried hard to understand me and supported my efforts. Here, immigrants are very puzzled by the looks of impatience and disdain and the frequent abruptly phrased "Pardon me's?" which they often feel to be strongly expressive not of an inability to understand but of an unwillingness to listen actively.

Successful communication comes in forms beyond the words themselves. It comes in gestures, in touch and in visual context:

> "Hoa is wonderful with gestures. She can talk with her hands better than many can talk with words. She makes everyone laugh." (Elaine's Journal, 11/17/86)
>
> "They loved the movie. They couldn't understand too much of the vocabulary, but understood the gist of the content." (Gerta's Journal, 1/13/87)
>
> "Dep touched my arm. I was surprised. He's a former student and we had discussed...touching in Vietnam and Canada and we had said that it was okay in Canada. It made me feel good because I now knew that he understood the discussion." (Elaine's Journal, 11/16/86)

In the first entry, we see not words but gestures having the power to make people laugh; in the second, enough understanding has happened outside of the words to enable pleasure; in the third, Elaine understood, through a simple gesture, that a whole lesson had been understood by the learner. When a person is learning a language, he or she is dependent upon aspects of language other than words and grammar to understand and be understood. The "good" teacher understands that and takes maximum advantage of it.

Pat made occasional references in his writing to style as an important facet of communication. He said his style "worked" in the classroom and that he liked my stories because my style was good. (Journal, 11/12/86) It is interesting to see him use style in relation both to one's way of being in language and to one's way of teaching. Success, according to Pat, depends on style. We communicate or do not communicate our style. Teaching, then, is not what we say and do so much as who we are.

There were a couple of references to the meaning of silence in communication. One was in a note I wrote in response to Ann's expression of profound discouragement over her negative performance appraisal. In that appraisal, the supervisor had rejected her criticisms of institutional policy, had threatened her with dismissal if she continued to promote the causes she did, and had neglected totally to name any of the excellent work she had done for the department. (She was lauded for this work in conversations I had with other administrators and staff.) In my note to her, I wrote:

> "In one of Illich's books, I recall his describing language as a cord of silence, with knots the words. Meaning, he said, is conveyed not so much in the words as in the silences between them.... Acknowledgment is necessary in a shared world, I think." (Ann's Journal, 11/20/86)

Ann refers herself a few days later to the way in which some other instructors protect themselves from the kind of response she got from her manager by being silent about that which they are doing which might be construed as "unacceptable" by management:

> "(The academic upgrading teachers) implied but didn't say, that they keep some of what they are doing hidden or couch it in acceptable terms." (Journal, 11/25/86)

I wondered, in reading the above, if our language teaching takes into account the communication inherent to selected silences and "couchings" of words for acceptability.

The success of communication appears to have as much to do with intent as it does with language skills. Elaine relates a washroom conversation with a student, that conversation beginning as follows: "Teacher show. No baby. Many many." (Journal, 11/25/86) Elaine, rather than shrugging and giving up, persevered by asking questions and, through a series of gestures and diagrams drawn in water on a bathroom counter, she was able to discover that her student was wearing an I.U.D. and wanted to know if she could wear a tampon and, if so, how to insert it. Elaine, satisfied with the communication which she later had verified with an interpreter, closes that daily entry with "Boy oh boy!"

For Elaine, the understanding always takes precedence over the form in which the language comes:

> "Are (the fruits) cheap or expensive? (The students) would say "Many, many". I would say "Why expensive if many, many?" They said the communists took all the food." (Journal, 12/4/86)

(The source of confusion above is easily seen by an E.S.L. teacher who has tried to teach the complexities of count and non-count nouns and their modifiers in English. The students were probably trying to say that the fruit cost "Much" or "a lot" but lacked the distinction between 'much' and 'many'.) In this conversation, Elaine sticks with the meaning rather than getting into abstract and difficult explanations of why the student should not have used the words she did. The intent took priority over the form, the idea over the linguistic container which housed it.

Another problem faced by the teacher is that of taking into consideration the cultural and personal contexts of languaging, contexts which alter the meaning of the words themselves. An example of this is to be found in the potentially different meanings attached to using open-ended questions in the classroom. Elaine writes about talking to a student concerning that student's frequent tendency to translate everything she said into Vietnamese for the other students, a practice Elaine and her students found quite annoying:

> "She...said that unless I ask a specific person, she does answer without thinking. I told her I would try to ask a specific person a lot of the time and (she agreed that) she would not answer. Today, she was better but she does love to dominate every conversation." (Journal, 12/2/86)

I may have understood this as a personal need from the student to demonstrate her superiority had I not had problems myself with the asking of open-ended questions in my dealings with Korean students. In that situation, I got no answer at all to an open-ended question as the Koreans would consider a person very arrogant if they presumed to answer a question not asked to them personally, unless that person were the leader or elder of the group and, even then, it would be uncomfortable, or so I have been told by numerous groups of Korean teachers.

Another contextual problem teachers can experience in teaching a second language comes from whether or not a student is literate in the first language. Pat writes: "All the students can read to some extent---what a difference from my last class." (Journal, 11/13/86) One of the biggest problems E.S.L. teachers have had in teaching students with little formal education has been that our teaching methodologies presume the presence of literacy skills when language learning in the so-called developed countries still depends heavily on the use of written exercises and "dialogues." Most teachers simply do not know where to begin if the students cannot read and write and very few teachers in my experience have any background in literacy as a field of study, nor does that field itself have much to say about E.S.L. literacy as yet.

Another phenomenon which these four teachers seemed to acknowledge, consciously or unconsciously, in their teaching was the existence of what I shall call synchronization in communication. They used many delightful expressions, especially at the beginning of the intake, to describe their efforts, failures and successes in creating some sort of synchronization of understanding among participants. Some actually talk about not yet feeling "in sync with" their students. Another writes about "getting on the same wavelength", being "in tune with" her students, and "getting on track". Pat writes about "a few (students who are) waiting", some who are "not yet comfortable" and some who "will come 'round". (Journal, 11/14/86) Such expressions point us beyond the words themselves to a kind of communication which results in mutual understanding and a willingness, indeed eagerness, to pursue such understandings however one can, a mindset very conducive to effective language learning. How it is that one can say one is "in sync." or "out of sync." is less clear but the notion of "freewheeling" seems to bring us closer to an understanding of the phenomenon of synchronization in communication which might give teachers a sense of direction in enabling it to come about.

II. THE MEANINGS OF TEACHING

When asked in the initial interviews what teaching meant to them, the participants responded with verbs which indicated what they thought they did as teachers and what effect it had upon the learners, for example, to present information and to set up situations in which one could practice and learn the language. However, when writing their stories and talking about their daily experiences, the world of teaching opened up to include not only their intentional "doings" but also the inner world of being, both of which found common ground for all the teachers engaged in this particular context. So it is that I made the decision to present the data on the meaning of teaching in two general categories which I somewhat reluctantly call ontological and functional, recognizing the interconnectedness of both but believing it is a useful way to shift our reflective attention from the intentional acts of teaching, which I call functional, to the unintentional, in which we delight, discover and struggle with our experiences as teachers. I say I am reluctant to use this separation because, in doing so, there is the danger of not seeing the connections and of valuing one category over another in evaluating the nature of our work and I do not believe that to be realistic. In fact, I believe that it is in reflecting upon the relationships to be found between these two categories that we have the opportunity to increase our consciousness and, in that, to make more informed choices in our practice.

A. Teaching as Being: The Ontological World of the Teacher

Into this category, I have placed entries in which the teachers have described their feelings about their work; their needs within it; and the doubts, questions, difficulties and challenges they experience therein. In this category, we see the teachers describing their work metaphorically, struggling with the notion of teaching as art or technique, and learning to read the world anew through their interactions with the learners.

1. Teaching as feeling, needing and having needs met

Not one of the participants in this research project failed to give ample expression to a wide variety of feelings they experienced in the course of their work. Their positive feelings about the value of what they do appear sufficient to balance the anxiety which drives others to leave the profession in favor of one less stressful. Yet the pleasure is experienced in the midst of feelings of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of their responsibility in the face of the difficulties encountered by those they would teach.

In the following entries, we see signs of the joy they experience:

> "Today was beautiful--doing what seemed important! At noon, I went to Georgia's class again and worked with four low students. We did a lot. I felt too much in control until they showed me how to do alphabet BINGO their way."
> (Ann's Journal, 25/11/86)

> "They loved the movie! They had a great time at our party-

> -that is we did! We talked about everything under the sun for six hours straight. There were no uncomfortable silences. Even the manager who was a Greek immigrant from twenty years ago joined us for awhile. It was beautiful!" (Gerta's Journal, 31/1/87)

> "On Saturday night, I drove by WCCC and felt warm all over. It was hard to drive by...." (Elaine's Journal, 14/1/87)

> "I'll be happy to spend more time with the kids but work has given me back to me!" (Elaine's Journal, 14/1/87)

> "Had a great afternoon. Finished day off with the birthday party.... We all left on a very high note." (Pat's Journal, 21/11/86)

In other entries, we see frustration and anguish:

> "I shouldn't have students more than ten weeks. (I get) too involved. I'm hard on myself." (Elaine's Journal, 1/12/86)

> "I'm overwhelmed sometimes at the vastness of my job. How can I possibly succeed in accomplishing all I want to do?" (Elaine's Journal, Now the Open Moment section, 26/11/86)

> "Sometimes I feel helpless how to help. I'm always touched by how close the students are to each other." (Elaine's Journal, Now the Open Moment section, 13/1/87)

> "I don't feel depressed but close to despondent. I feel sad about my class going. I feel sad about Hien.... I feel helpless. Do I let her be to run her own life?" (Elaine's Journal, 28/1/87)

> "What I had planned as a warm-up bombed.... Nobody understood.... I felt they had completely blocked." (Ann's Journal, 10/12/86)

> "After reading (my entry about the restaurant field trip), I remembered the struggle and I realized how ill-equipped they are for the world and only three weeks left. Ah...! (Elaine's Journal, 8/1/87)

> "...this last week is too emotional for me.... A job I love is finishing. I don't know if I have a job in April. I am very attached to my students. I'm thinking about them. (The children) are delighted that I'll be home. They need me now. It's been a topsy-turvy time for them since September." (Elaine's Journal, 29/1/87)
>
> "I'm not feeling pessimistic about the class but I'm feeling their frustrations. I wish I could give them "instant English" pills. This feeling is normal for me at the end of every session. At the beginning of a session, I go through a panic stage, where I want to teach them everything at once. I have to control myself.... I have these urges to spend all day with them, even it it's just to keep them speaking in English. It's an overreaction, but you get attached, want them to be happy, successful." (Gerta's Journal, 26/1/87)

Sometimes, the pain or frustration the teachers feel is due to their sense of helplessness in the face of the overwhelming difficulties the learners' lives present. Elaine opens a window on John's lifeworld in the following excerpt:

> "...ten minutes later, I realized--no John. He was in the hall smoking like crazy. He didn't want to come back so I didn't force him.... The only thing he said was 'Government no passports.'" (Journal, 13/1/87)

Elaine went on to describe John's impossible dilemma of trying to learn English while thinking only about his wife and children being stranded in their homeland because the government refused to give them passports.

While teaching is often described as meeting the needs of the learners, the teachers' stories give other instances of the learners meeting their needs, sometimes in very simple, practical ways:

> "I've had the chills all day and my eyes are warm.... This afternoon, it was an effort to be perky. Hoa gave me something in hot water.... She has a remedy for everything. The drink stopped the coughing." (Elaine's Journal, 9/12/86)

Other feelings arise not out of the interactions with the learners but out of the interactions with colleagues or supervisors. Ann tells us of her need for acknowledgement:

> "I've been very down since yesterday afternoon. First, (my supervisor) and I met about my performance

> appraisal. I say I don't need acknowledgment but I was very disappointed he did not value my work...and he strongly disapproves of the desire he senses in me to make more of the E.S.L. Program like the S.N. Program." (Journal, 1/11/86)

In other scenarios, the feelings arise out of self-judgment, as we see Gerta trying to make sense out of a very painful experience in which one of her students subjected her to a series of obscene phone calls before he was caught and stopped:

> "If Bassam is guilty, what's running through my head is why I didn't see that destructive side of him before? I perceive this as a failure on my part. The intuition wasn't good enough in this situation." (Journal, 5/1/87)

In all of these tellings, we see the very human side of the teacher who needs to feel fulfilled and acknowledged, who struggles with making good decisions in difficult situations, and who tries to make meaning out of daily experiences in the classroom. We see the need to make the most of the very limited time they have to work with the learners. In Elaine's recollection of Hoa's remedy for her chills, we also see the beautiful mutuality of a learning journey in which everyone has something of value to give and everyone has need of and appreciation for what is brought by the other.

2. Teaching as doubting and questioning

Whereas K-12 programs have curricula designed provincially in accordance with widely mandated priorities and understandings of the meaning of public education, adult E.S.L. programs have, at best, curricula designed within the program in which they are to be used, curricula based often on very narrow understandings of what E.S.L. is all about. In addition, teachers often take a lot of liberty with their planning, partly because there is not usually a massive system of evaluation to pressure them into teaching in a particular way. As a result, teachers have to make a lot of decisions about what to teach and how to teach and the conscientious teachers tend often to see their shortcomings and the difficulty of trying to accomplish so much in so short a time. Here, we see a litany of questions raised by the research participants:

> "Am I making effective use of time, or am I just trying to do too much work?" (Ann's Journal, 14/11/86)

> "What is learning? I'm not at all sure. Something understood? Retained? Something that makes a difference?" (Ann's Journal, 24/11/86)

> "As much as I try being intuitive in meeting their needs, is the classroom still too artificial?" (Elaine's Journal, 26/11/86)

> "(The students) were excited. I'm not sure why. Was it because they understood and could do it?" (Elaine's Journal, 19/11/86)

> "(The students are) very concerned about whether they've improved their English since starting this class. This makes me question my teaching when I see they have to ask me." (Gerta's Journal, 20/1/87)

Following feelings of frustration over trying to reschedule people to fit with their childcare arrangements, Ann writes:

> "These issues keep coming up. If these people go out in the real world, employers, etc. won't bend so much. Are we helping them when we do? Who's to say which needs are the greatest? Shouldn't we support people who voice their needs and encourage others to do so too? Is it possible to meet everybody's needs?" (Ann's Journal, 14/11/86)

In the preceding entries, we see genuine concern and commitment for meeting the most diverse set of needs for the learners. If there were any doubt that E.S.L. were about more than vocabulary and grammar, such doubts ought to be banished by listening to such heartfelt questioning done by the teachers as they seek to make ever better use of the time they have with the learners who never seem ready to go out into a world in which they are yet handicapped by their newness to the country and the language.

Some of the questions are expressed as self-doubts:

> "I do this less than I used to. I am not totally confident about my decisons." (Elaine's Journal, 8/11/86)

> "Right now, I wouldn't have the confidence to teach somebody else's class with them watching." (Ann's Journal, 26/11/86)

> "I discovered all but two students drank. All said they drank only on weekends, never if they were going to work or school. I was surprised at the amount consumed. Alcohol is so expensive. Is alcohol a temporary release from problems? I feel I've had a peek at their real lives outside schooling but I'm not sure what to do with this knowledge." (Elaine's Journal, 24/11/86)

In another moment of doubt, Elaine is caught between two different systems of understanding, one old, one new:

> "Today, I had a plan and I followed it.... I had a very good

> day but it doesn't seem to go along with the idea of finding out what the students want and going with it." (Elaine's Journal, 20/11/86)

Her "curriculum as plan" in this program tells her to let the content come from the students. Her lived experience, however, tells her that that does not always happen and that both she and the learners can benefit from a lesson she prepares and delivers, even if largely without their input. That she has doubts about this suggests that she has seen the new approach as a clearly-bound alternative to the old one rather than as a concept she can play with and finds ways of integrating with methodologies and approaches which have worked for her in the past.

In the moments of questioning, doubting and reflecting, there are also interesting moments of being aware of one's unawareness, of one's not knowing. Observations yield questions and the questions are answered with "I don't know."

> "Should the students have more predictable things or is that impossible considering the way we teach? I don't know.... During the weekend conversations..., the students start to get bored. I don't know how to get around this." (Elaine's Journal, 15/12/86)

> "What are our students learning? I don't know." (Elaine's Journal, 1/12/86)

Other doubts only arise when their actions and decisions, intuitively taken, are questioned, as they often were during the research. They felt good about their decisions in the moment but, finding themselves incapable of explaining why they made them, are sometimes seized with doubts and questions:

> "I can't seem to remember what was said or what was asked to get such a wonderful conversation rolling. That's why it's hard to put together a curriculum at this level. Wonderful things happen, but why?" (Elaine's Journal, 22/1/87)

> "The students helped him. They seemed to take him under their wings. They immediately warmed up to him. It was so, so neat. I wish I could explain that warm, warm feeling that was in the room." (Elaine's Journal, 16/11/86)

> "I can see that a lot has been accomplished. It didn't just happen. But how? I find it extremely hard to explain what I do." (Pat's Journal, Feedback section, 20/1/87)

Whereas the preceding questions and wishes may indicate that the questioners see not knowing as not fully acceptable, there were other passages wherein they knew they did not know but seemed clearly comfortable with that.

> "I almost cried listening to your stories. Also, I felt naive listening to you, your awareness; I felt that I look at the world through rose-colored glasses. Also, I thought about how I separate my worlds. When I am in class, I think of nothing but my students and I am totally there for them." (Elaine's Journal, 8/11/86)
>
> "Besides what I intend to teach, there are my hidden agendas...some conscious to me but not to the students, some conscious to the students but not to me, and some not conscious to any of us." (Ann's Journal, 24/11/86)

Occasionally, the doubting would be not so much about one's own decisions as about those of a colleague:

> "(There is) a constant tug of war (between) his encouraging the students to take the initiative and then getting them to do it his way. He loosens up and then tries to get their attention (with some apparent frustration). He needles quiet students to speak." (Ann's Journal, 27/11/86)

Other doubts appear as contradictions recognized, as in a brief entry in Elaine's journal: "I seem to tell people, 'Don't dwell. Don't think so much,' and I'm always thinking." (Now the Open Moment section, 30/11/86)

All of the questions, doubts, and contradictions recognized are signs of teachers in process, teachers who are aware of how much they do not know and aware of the need to keep learning if they are to succeed in bettering the learning opportunities for the learners entrusting themselves to their care. Likewise for those of us who read their struggle for understanding, we also have the opportunity to re-evaluate what we do and how we might do it more effectively.

3. Teaching as meeting difficulty and challenge

The experiences the teachers cited of the difficulties of their work could be summarized in four categories: job insecurity, difficulties associated with living up to the demands of the job, difficulties related to the differences between the new curriculum and more traditional curricular approaches, and encounters with the unexpected.

Whereas job insecurity is expected by most people in the E.S.L. profession, for it is a perennial problem everywhere in Canada, that fact did not lessen the stress the teachers experienced on account of it. In fact, two of the four are no longer teaching in E.S.L., one attributing this to her need for job security. Gerta, at the project's end, writes:

> "My major concern right now is job security. I'm hoping that accepting this (temporary job with the school board) will eventually lead to something permanent." (Journal, 9/1/87)

Closely related to job insecurity and the fear associated with the that was conflict with the administration and the fear of saying what one thought in case that would lead to being laid off. Ann wrote pages of notes about the conflicts in the institution and peoples' fear of dealing with them. As one example:

> "I was advised not to confront (the performance evaluator) because I and the program would lose big.... My gut says not to confront, not to grieve (to the union, an unjust performance appraisal), to pull in my horns, to do what I do best, to stay (in my job) as long as possible." (Journal, 26/11/86)

Other entries describe her discomfort, her fears, her sense of hopelessness at ever solving the conflicts with an administration she believes to be out of touch with the real world of the learners. The perceived inability of the administration to accept or even see the unique contribution of these teachers is revealed in one of Ann's entries:

> "(The supervisor's) memo wants the manual rewritten to be "exportable", "more user friendly", "divisible into units". He still doesn't understand." (Journal, 27/11/86)

The administration's lack of support for the Special Basic Curriculum was a source of tension, fear and frustration for all of the teachers and came up frequently in the group conversations as well as the journals.

Without that kind of interference and worry, the job itself was still demanding and presented its own difficulties. Elaine describes the hours of planning for a field trip and finishes by saying, "This is difficult and a lot of work but (I) dug into it because it was meaningful to the learners. (Truth or assumption on my part?)" (Journal, 8/1/87)

The fact that the students come from different language and cultural backgrounds, social classes, and educational histories, and, are at such different levels in language and learning ability presents a major challenge to all the teachers. Ann describes a class she visited:

> "The experience with Carla's class was very mixed. She'd told me of her frustrations but I had to experience it for myself. I agree that the mix of twelve Poles, two Spanish-speakers, and two Vietnamese is a bad one because of such differences in styles, because the Poles speak Polish all the

> time and because they don't seem to give a damn about the others. They are quite willing to control the teacher but take little or no initiative to do anything on their own." (Journal, 10/12/86)

It is also stressful to have to convey bad news to the learners to whom the teachers become so close.

> Ann: "Intake today. At the front desk it felt good to see familiar faces from testing, bad to tell twelve they had to go to (a different campus which is very inconvenient for most students) and bad to tell one man whose wife (had been accepted) that he'd have to wait until February." (Journal, 12/11/86)

Other stresses revolved around balancing home and work needs:

> Elaine: "I feel myself slipping into __________ . I seemed more able before to separate my worlds. I find myself thinking about the students more and more. It's becoming my life, and there's my children and my relationship with (my husband)." (Journal, Feedback section, 1/12/86)

Another of Elaine's anecdotes I found amusing but relevant and it reminded me so much of my own years at the same institution when I had four young children to care for:

> "I was late this morning. I washed my car last night and the doors were frozen shut this morning. I used hot water, they opened, I went to collect the kids (from their dad's place) and (one) says "I have to poop." By the time we get to the car, the door is frozen again. I called Ann. I arrived ten minutes late." (Journal, 9/12/86)

Elaine also found that even her own reputation as a teacher had become a source of stress:

> "I'm feeling pressure to be a wonderful teacher. My old students really enjoyed the first ten weeks (and thus have expectations!) and were really happy to be in my class again.... The other students had heard about me and again, expectations. I feel I have a lot of expectations to live up to." (Journal, 17/11/86)

Other stresses mentioned included fatigue and an awareness of not having enough knowledge to deal with the problems one encountered. Regarding fatigue, the research project added to that and Ann writes: "I'm too tired to reflect." (Journal, 8/11/86)

Regarding not knowing enough, Ann writes about helping out in a class where the students were drawing family trees in order to learn the English names for familial relationships. It was a frustrating exercise for teachers and students alike and Ann notes, "All work reflected low literacy in their own language. Many were not able to be linear in their thinking." (Journal, 26/11/86)

In addition to not knowing their educational backgrounds, we also do not know the way in which other cultures conceptualize reality and are, therefore, often unaware when our assumptions are incorrect. For example, as English speakers, we think of the nuclear family and the extended family. I have noticed that Amharic speakers in English refer not to their *family* but always to their *families* since one's situation within an extended family (to seven houses) in that culture is very significant to every aspect of one's life. I used to correct such speakers by telling them that in English, family is a mass noun which includes all the members of one family. Now, I explain the difference in the way we see the notion of "family" and let them make the choice.

Three of the teachers raised contrasts between the emergent curriculum of the S.N. program and the prescribed curriculum of other programs they had taught in, some of those contrasts perceived as stressful, others as satisfying. Most of the teachers live the contradictions, acting one moment from one perspective and another, from the other.

> "Ann: "I felt very uncomfortable when I was being directive, telling students to write relationships, or writing things on their posters for them to copy. It felt good to discuss their work, to make meaning." (Journal, 26/11/86)
>
> Gerta: "Although I am in favor of the freedom in this program, whenever I see the tests, I get the urge to get involved in a more detailed and set curriculum." (Journal, 19,1/86)

In the above passage, Gerta is aware of the conflict between an emergent, meaning-making curriculum, on one hand, and the need to have students write tests, the results of which will determine how they will be placed. (The tests are based on being able to use the grammar correctly.) In the following passage, by contradiction, she does not appear aware of the message she conveys regarding the nature of language learning:

> "Wouldn't it be nice to be able to learn a language through tapes attached to your brain at night? The subconscious does all the painful, drudgery work." (Journal, 26/1/87)

Gerta's words stand in sharp contrast to Ann's earlier statement that it felt good to make meaning. Ann was conscious of the difference between old ways and new. Gerta appears to be trying to teach out of new ways when her understandings appear very much rooted in the old. This would be stressful. Pat appears to be conscious of and satisfied with the change when he says:

> "For me, it was a very easy and satisfying week. I didn't have to force language. It just came. We were doing things and the language just came out." (Journal, 11/1/87)

The last source of difficulty mentioned by the teachers concerned the insecurity created by the unexpected. Both Gerta and Elaine referred to volunteers not showing up when classes had been planned with the expectation of their presence. (Journal, 14/11/86 and Journal, 2/12/86, respectively.) Ann refers to interruptions, one from a nurse coming in to read TB tests and one from a student from another class coming to borrow his friends's bus pass. She says: "I seemed to take it in stride." (Journal, 27/11/86)

4. Teaching as art or skill?

One of the greatest sources of tension in teaching this program appeared to be this tension between understanding teaching to be an art or to be a skill replete with set techniques. First of all, the Special Needs Program was a relatively small one situated within a large department in which the other programs were clearly seen as more technical in the approach, thus the expectation on the part of the department head and other administrators that the S.N. program's curriculum be written up as a clearly-followable set of content objectives and techniques for realizing them. Because all of the teachers had taught in the other programs, it seemed often easier to do the known, to use the old explanations, to set the old objectives within the old assumptions. No one called you to account for that because it had always been so. The new S.N. curriculum, however, set empowerment as an intent and defined an emergent curriculum, which was to be elicited from the students, as the way to move towards that primary intent. Intuitively and humanly, this appealed to the teachers. It made sense but none of us knew enough to anticipate all the obstacles which would arise as we tried to put that into practice.

Our difficulty in "doing" was matched by a difficulty in naming, as we have seen earlier. One response to this difficulty was to speak metaphorically of our experiences in the classroom. Pat spoke most often in this manner, usually using a sports metaphor, as we see below:

> "Well, Virginia, I have just completed five weeks of coaching this S.N. team in this tough E.S.L. league.... The team has learned some fundamentals: a lot of new vocabulary, verbs.... Their listening skills have really improved. We've had a couple of injuries. Ruth seems to be out indefinitely with some kind of personal hurt. She was one of my best players.... Jai Yi... often goes to sleep on the bench between periods.... Getting to their goal is more important than how to get there." (Journal, 17/12/86)

Others used a music metaphor, speaking of getting into the swing of things (Elaine's

Journal, 5/1/87) and being on the same wavelength (Pat's Journal, 19/11/86). In responding one day to Elaine's journal, I said:

> "...unlike an E.S.L. class, where everyone is of a different culture and therefore looks to me to set the tone, the Koreans, by sheer weight of numbers, were setting an unspoken tone I did not understand and yet knew I was not in tune with. It exhausted me." (in Elaine's Journal, 14/11/86)

In these metaphors, I believe, there are clues for those of us who would ponder to what extent and in what context teaching E.S.L. is art or technique. In music, we had a sense of rhythm and timing as being important, of harmony and intensity as being of value. In the hockey metaphor, we see the importance of teamwork, of reaching a predefined goal, of cooperating with the coach, of strategy, and of improving our techniques. Whereas we would normally think of music as art and hockey as skill or technique, there are musicians who are technicians and hockey players who are artistic. The point is not to generalize but rather to see in the metaphors the essence of what is being described and the implications for the participants.

In the S.N. program, most of the teachers find themselves responding to some unnamed inner intuition, an experience shared by artists rather than technicians. Pat, for example, speaks of "feeling his way about" and of "being good on (his) feet", which calls forth an image of teacher as dancer. (Journal, 14/11/86) Later, he tries to account for the balancing nature of teaching as he experiences it:

> "This balance in kinds of activities doesn't just happen. Because of my many years of teaching, I have this sense of balance in my being. I don't systematically plan it, but I have a 'sense' for it (if you know what I mean)." (Journal, 14/12/86)

The teachers find this inner knowing very hard to talk about:

> "I always look at each person and go from there. How are they responding to me, negatively or positively? I go on personality to personality rather than culture. I'm having difficulty explaining this." (Pat's Journal, 13/11/86)

They find it mysterious or, as Elaine puts it, "eery":

> "You can't write (the curriculum) down beforehand. You can't have a manual prepared ahead to time to show what you're going to do. There's a sense of eeriness about it." (Undated material written in the margins of my original four stories as found in Elaine's Journal)

They speak of "ah-ha!" moments for themselves and for the learners:

> "It's a different ah-ha for a student who has heard of something and is asking the English word than for a student who has never seen or heard about something before. In a way, maybe it simplifies it because they are learning the information in (their new) language and the knowledge is new and exciting. On the other hand, I could sense the feeling of security when they came across something.... they had a word for in their own language." (Journal, 25/11/86)

For the artist, style becomes less a set of techniques than an expression of personality. Pat, for example, frequently names his response to the learners as his "style" as in the following: "I find teaching E.S.L. quite easy. My 'style' seems to work in the classroom." (Journal, 11/11/86) He also recognizes that whereas his way of being might work well for the learning of some students, it might not do so for all:

> "I think it would be difficult to change my style to accommodate students that want a totally different approach to learning. My teaching is so interwoven with my personality that I find it almost impossible to change." (Journal, 29/11/86)

In the College, there seemed to be conflicts between those who saw education as art and those who would mandate it as training or technique. The teachers recognized Pat's comments about style and when he would say, "You know what I mean?", they would nod in understanding. However, this was not the case for administrators when the teachers tried at meetings to defend their unorthodox ideas of an "emergent curriculum". Style and inner knowing are not easily explainable to one who thinks in a technical manner. The following point was lost on one who had no reference points to understand its relevance:

> "I don't know what an ideal atmosphere (for learning a language) is... I think it is a place where trust abounds. I show my students that they can trust me. I show it in many ways: by being kind, by being thoughtful, by being a caring person. I try to act as a facilitator in getting the students to trust one another." (Pat's Journal, 21/11/86)

Whereas Pat stands for the importance of both language training (a technical pursuit) and language education (a more wholistic, artistic pursuit) (Journal, 9/12/86), he does see the shortcomings of training in working with students who do not have much formal education in their countries of origin:

> "I don't think you can train low level students to learn

> English. You can train them to imitate words and easy sentences, but there's a good chance there will be no meaning attached to the words. Students acquire language when the language is practical and relevant, language that enables them to participate in Canadian society." (Journal, 7/12/86)

In his words, I am reminded of the magic moment when I saw so clearly the lack of meaning attached to the words for four Vietnamese students who had come here as refugees with little or no formal education in their country. I remember pointing at a chair and saying "chair" to the students. Then, as I had been taught, I contextualized the vocabulary by placing it into a complete utterance. I said, "This is a chair." Their faces fell as their disappointment over incomprehension set in and I felt lost to convey the meaning of words which had grammatical function but no intrinsic meaning.

Ann gives us one more very significant distinction between teaching as art and teaching as skill. She begins by defining art as a personal, unanalyzable creative power and skill as that which stresses technical knowledge and proficiency. She then says "One of the reasons I am so uncomfortable with training is that unpredicted knowledge and experience are discounted." (Journal, 7/12/86) Here, in a succinct sentence, is the essence of the difference between the teachers' S.N. curriculum and the curriculum of the other programs within the department. Who can know beforehand the wealth of experience which will be brought into the classroom by a unique, one-time-only group of learners who come together in a particular place and time in history? Even as I write this sentence, war has recently broken out in the Middle East and the class I am currently teaching is not at all the same class I taught one week ago. Some of their families live in Gulf countries. The pervasive insecurity of the new immigrant or the person of color is exaggerated by the threat of a global war and local incidents of terrorizing the Arabic-speaking community. No curriculum guide can tell me how to educate this group of learners. Like an artist, I must create my response to them in the moment I find them.

5. Teaching as learning

Many E.S.L. teachers when asked why they stay in E.S.L. when they could be doing work which was more lucrative or more secure will say that it is because E.S.L. is so interesting. I have always felt that the E.S.L. classroom was a living encylopedia into which walked all that was happening in the world.

Five types of teacher learning are apparent in the words of the teachers in their journals. First, there is the functional learning one needs in order to teach, the learning about one's students which goes on throughout a program and which one actively seeks, especially at the beginning, in order to determine the learners' needs and respond to them. Secondly, is the learning availed one by his or her colleagues' knowledge and experience. The third I call bonus learning since the teachers seem to see it not as a given but as a delightful surprise which rewards their labors. Fourth is self-knowledge and fifth is a knowledge generation which comes between self and other when both stretch to make meaning between them.

Every E.S.L. teacher spends the first few days getting to know the learners and adapting the curriculum to their needs as they show themselves but in the S.N. curriculum, this process is even more critical because the curriculum guide is much less content-specific in its guiding capacity and much more dependent on on-going information from the learners. Pat sees himself as a reader when he does that initial assessment:

> "Another thought came through my mind as I read these pages. My observations about my students were very accurate. After eight weeks, I still have the same impressions. I really think that through experience or whatever I can really get a lot of information about a person in just a few contacts. I had a pretty good 'read' on my students very early....." (Journal, 21/1/87)

Elaine relates a lesson in which most of the learning that day was hers. Two of her students knew most of the words she had been teaching and made the most of the two-to-one ratio of teachers to students. (She had several volunteers that day.) For others, "It was like they had never heard the words before. It was a discovery morning about the students. It was much more than ten vocabulary words." (Journal, 16/11/86)

Even as Elaine is very conscious of learning from her students and demonstrates often that she, like Pat, "reads" their faces, she also is aware that they read hers and is quite clear about what she wants them to see there:

> "When I look into each person's face, I want each person to understand what's happening and to be interested and excited by what's happening." (Journal, 12/11/86)

The teachers also value their learning from their colleagues and saw the research project as yet another opportunity for that to happen. In our group conversations, all the teachers exchanged what they were doing, how they felt about it and how it related to the questions posed in the research. Gerta found something appealing about Pat's rather unorthodox approaches:

> "I would love to talk more to Pat about what happens in his class, to see if I could pick up a different way of looking at my students." (Journal, 7/11/86)

Elaine saw the project as an opportunity to learn from Ann and me, both of whom had been teaching E.S.L. longer than anyone with whom they were working:

> "Well, in the afternoon you and Ann were there. As I told Ann, I was nervous before you two came in but I want you both to come more. I can learn so much from both of you." (Journal, 4/12/86)

> "I enjoyed listening and watching you work with the pictures. It's always good to watch other people teaching. It's an inspiration." (Journal, 8/12/86)

In the hustle of regular teaching, the teachers seldom had the kind of time they would have liked to discuss with each other or to be in the classrooms with each other. The research project was stressful with its time commitments but did create these opportunities and the teachers really seemed to value them.

One of the reasons cited by every one of the teachers in the initial interviews as to why they taught E.S.L. was that it was so interesting, that they learned so much. Elaine says: "Each student is like a novel slowly unfolding before me." (Journal, 20/11/86) As we do with any good novel, she anticipates every "page turning" with pleasure:

> "I can't wait until my interview with John today. I want to know what he's thinking.... I'm always amazed at how much I'm continually learning about the students' backgrounds and cultures. I know I could do more reading on each country but I like having the information come from them. They are not only communicating in English but I'm really interested because the information is new to me." (Journal, 1/12/86)

Elaine's interest in her students' lives seems to go far beyond a functional need to know in order to teach. In her journal at some point she had written that she worked hard to get 100% participation from her students. While re-reading her own journal, she writes later:

> "When I read 100% participation, for some reason, I don't know why, what came to mind is my desire to discover everything I can possibly discover about my students' lives." (Journal, Feedback section, 8/11/86)

This acute interest is evidenced by the numerous stories she tells in her journal, stories in which the lives of her students are painted in glowing contrast to our own lives as teachers. As I read her many stories, I was touched by her implicit assumption that I would value reading these as much as she had enjoyed hearing them (she was right!) because I knew what a commitment it was for Elaine to feed, bathe and bed down her two children each night before she even sat down to work on her journal. Here are a couple of small examples:

> "It's wonderful to listen to them tell a story. Dep was happy today because his son does not have to go into the army. He sent $100 American to bribe the doctor and it worked." (Journal, 19/1/87)

> "I asked, 'What would you do if you had $100,000?' First of all, they didn't understand that large amount of money so I explained. I asked them to cut pictures from magazines (to illustrate what they would use the money for.) The general mood was depression. A couple of students said "No money, no think." I think maybe the combination of thinking about Christmas and family and money was a bad combination." (Journal, 9/12/86)

Elaine successfully elicits stories from these learners, in spite of their very low levels of English, I believe, because the students feel her respect for them and her genuine interest in understanding them.

> "What amazed me was the resilience and the ability to make the best out of a situation.... I admire my students." (Journal, 9/12/86)

Gerta also values what she learns and sees it as an exchange:

> "(The class) is becoming a fifty-fifty learning relationship. I'm learning about their folk medicine, hobbies, cultures, lifestyles, economic situations...., histories, etc. This is better than a book on their countries any day." (Journal, 8/1/87)

Pat takes a similar view and casts it as a metaphor in response to a question I had often asked, "What is teaching?"

> "Walking with--discovering the world--neighborhood--a journey together, but I take the first step. I start the journey. But the journey is as much mine as theirs. On this journey we share, give and take from one another....." (Journal, 26/1/87)

In light of their earlier stated lack of knowledge about their field and the people they teach, we can see in their words of enthusiasm for learning along with the learners how those obstacles are overcome, not in a technical way, but in a mutual reaching for common meaning and understanding between the so-called 'learner' and 'teacher'. They meet and connect as human beings in the medium of the English language.

To pick up from Pat's words, the learning one takes from one's experience in teaching E.S.L. is also a learning about oneself. In a back-and-forth conversation in the journal, in which I began by asking whether Ann preferred language education or training, she replied the former, and I then asked "What values and vision of society, of self, support that choice?" Ann replied: "When I know my values and vision, the rest will be clearer." (Journal, 9/12/86) The beginning of self-knowledge is the knowledge that one does not know oneself.

In addition to reflecting on what she was learning, Ann reflected also on what other teachers were learning from the S.N. experience:

> "Jane and I talked. I was thrilled to listen to a recent convert, somebody who had been scared stiff of S.N. just two months ago. She's come so far partly because the "real" Jane is beginning to emerge. The same person who wanted an externally-imposed structure, a course outline, is now speaking our language." (Journal, 2/12/86)

Because the S.N. curriculum is so dynamic and is dependent on participatory processes rather than content delivery, it offers excitement to the teacher who opens herself or himself to it but, for the one who is not ready, it can also be very frightening:

> "Gerta is moving but not going anywhere right now because she's afraid to let go of something. There's something about the S.N. Program that's very freeing, opening but somehow makes us vulnerable." (Ann's Journal, 2/12/86)

The last type of learning I saw within the journals, I have already referred to in relation to the stories described as bonus learning. Such learning, I feel, deserves its own category because it involves so much more than a transfer of knowledge from one source to another. It involves a mutual reaching, a stretching of two persons both of whom desire intensely to understand and be understood. As a voyeur reading Elaine's stories, I often felt as a third party compelled to do the same stretching as did the students and teachers in understanding one another. It amazed me that meanings were communicated with the limited words the students used. Not the best example, this nonetheless illustrates the point:

> "When I first walked into the room, I asked Dep, 'Where is Hoa?' He pointed to his body and asked, 'What's this, teacher?' and drew a picture on the blackboard. I supplied the words "incision, sutures, stitches." A then says, 'Hoa stop baby.' Then, I wrote the word 'abortion'." (Journal, 12/11/86)

The world of S.N. teaching is, perhaps, first of all, a world of learning. In the S.N. classrooms, teachers learn about others and their worlds of experiences and learnings; they learn about themselves and, together with the learners, they struggle to create worlds of meaning comprehensible to them both.

B. Teaching as Doing

In the previous section, we saw the teacher as a human being, with feelings, needs and expectations. In this section, we see the teacher in action as she or he responds to the role given her by the society, by the institution and by the learners. Whereas the teacher is taught to be a planner, an organizer, a deliverer of "the goods", and an evaluator or tester, the stories reveal other activities in the world of the teacher's doing. She[4] responds to people and situations. She makes connections. She draws forth the learners as she finds them. She interprets meanings: to herself, to the learner, to colleagues, to society. She judges. She uses the "tools of the trade". She brokers power. She "freewheels". Last, but not least, she is the medium through which the immigrant newcomer makes his or her way into Canadian society.

1. Teaching as responding and relating to persons, events, and situations

In the more orthodox E.S.L. programs taught within this institution, the curricula list the content which is to be covered at each level and the resources which are available for use with that level. Certain field trips are suggested. The teacher's relative compliance is assured by the knowledge that, upon program completion, students will be tested for the content listed for that level in the curriculum. The Special Needs Program, however, takes a different approach wherein priority is given to eliciting the learners' experiences, expectations, needs and hopes, to list a few aspects of what they bring to the classroom. The teacher's job is then to respond to what comes in a way which gives the learners sufficient English language to name their experiences and have greater control over them.

Ann describes her confidence in one of the S.N. teachers not involved in the research:

> "But I had the feeling that Ken's relationship with the students is such that they feel free to communicate their interests, dislikes, etc. because they know he will respond." (Journal, 7/1/87)

One of the results of this rhythmic flow of information and response is that the students and teacher often experience a strong sense of community with one another, a community in which there is intimacy and trust, some examples of which follow, all from Pat's journal entries:

> "We were a very close family all week." (Journal, 11/1/87)
>
> "We are a family. Usually, I am the father, looking after, guiding my family. Sometimes, 'though, I am just one of the kids, not guiding, just going along with what happens and enjoying being part of it, not wanting to control." (Journal, 20/1/87)
>
> "I read the letter outloud to the students around me. They were silent but I could see volumes in their eyes. We were very close together. Some students were leaning on me." (Journal, 20/11/86)

Ann, in knowing she will be teaching one of Pat's classes, respects the value brought by such intimacy as we have just seen and plans her lesson out of that awareness:

> "I told Pat that...I didn't want to start teaching family in his class although I wouldn't mind the opportunity to participate with him. It's a very intimate experience that I wouldn't want to take away from him and the students. He seemed relieved." (Journal, 26/11/86)

It is not only an intimacy between learner and teacher which is valued, but amongst the learners themselves.

> "They talked about their families, about moving from the city to the country, about starvation. They seemed to feel a sense of 'We came from a similar situation.' Also, we 'don't like communism.' They felt closer to each other." (Journal, 18/11/86)

This relationship among the learners is very important because, like all E.S.L. classrooms, the S.N. classrooms consist of people from many cultures and languages, each with their own biases, discriminations, values and judgments. In regular E.S.L. classes, where the focus is on the content, conflicts between groups work against learning for some, if not all. In the S.N. program, where the focus is on the community of actual persons, English becomes not the end but the medium for all participants to get to know each other, to discover what they have in common and to build a network of support for their common struggle to come to terms with a new society.

Whereas the regular E.S.L. programs focus attention upon that which the learner does *not* know, the S.N. program is focussed upon the learner as person, in his or her wholeness. Ann reflects upon the shift within herself as a result of her S.N. experience.

> "In the days that I hid behind a role, I did relate to students mainly in their role. I may be kidding myself but I think I relate to them as persons now." (Journal, 7/1/87)

Elaine makes a connection between this experience and one she had when she worked in special education:

> "An experience comes to mind, when I taught a Down's Syndrome girl. I taught the person. It seems to me that the handicap was not really a factor. To me, it's the person." (Journal, 13/11/86)

This larger response to the whole person extends not only to participants but to situations as well. Many E.S.L. teachers would take their classes on a field trip to the bank to learn the way in which we do our banking in Canada, but Elaine sees this field trip as being about more than banking:

> "It was more than going to the bank. We walked and talked about the weather. I guess that is the biggest thing, that we talked about many things: fire in the BINGO hall, the icy sidewalk, etc." (Journal, 3/12/86)

We can see, in the preceding passage, that she sees the journey to and from the bank as being just as rich in learning opportunities as the time in the bank itself. She seems to understand that language is real and immediate, that it enables people to connect to the moment and to one another in that moment.

Timing is one of the big differences between the S.N. program and the other programs. Planners and teachers alike see that it makes all the difference when the teacher teaches a lesson in response to a stated need rather than because it is in the curriculum:

> "The other day, a student came up to me and said 'Problem, bank.' I soon figured out that he wanted to cash his cheque at the bank but he didn't know what language to use. I quickly wrote a dialogue on the board.... Within a few minutes, he was off to cash his cheque and to get money to pay his rent. I'm sure that he'll retain this language, not because of me but because of his need for it." (Pat's Journal, 7/12/86)
>
> "Did I tell you about the time when my classroom became a bus? It was a wonderful happening and all came about because Barbara was trying to tell me about her conversations with her busdriver." (Pat's Journal 20/1/87)
>
> "Zenaida was inviting De Hoan to her home so she could show her how to make spring rolls. I booked the kitchen on the 6th floor. We're going to cook. It should be fun." (Pat's Journal, 13/1/87)
>
> "While they were working, some students were humming. I listened. They were English tunes. I'm going to look for the music and words." (Elaine's Journal, 24/11/86)

How different is this teaching in response to what the learners bring from the teaching, from that of teaching from the content that is in the curriculum guide. There is an energy to this teaching. There is a respect for keeping language "real" rather than "classroom" in its orientation. Some of the teachers, for example, give out their home phone number so that the students can phone them at home. When one of his students asked to call him at home, Pat responded affirmatively but quickly realized that the student did not know how to do so. He wrote a dialogue on the board and helped the class to prepare a phone directory so that they could call one another. (Journal, 21/1/87)

The boundaries of instruction seem to be much more open in this program due to the responsive orientation existing within it. Elaine's entry which follows gives us an idea of the lifeworlds brought by the learners, lifeworlds so different from our own that they demand creative responses:

> "Dep was having difficulty seeing. I said, 'Where are your glasses?' He said they made him dizzy. He said he bought the glasses in the Philippines but never went to an eye doctor. He said he couldn't afford to go the eye doctor and buy glasses. Dung and Hung then said they had problems with their eyes but they couldn't afford to either. Dep also said that, as of December, his sister said he and his son could not live in the house anymore and also that they wouldn't give them food. I'll set up appointments with the counsellor tomorrow." (Elaine's Journal, 2/12/86)
>
> "I also discussed winter sports after the video. This discussion made me want to take them out and experience some of these. I was talking to Heather and she said that classes have gone cross-country skiing. I'm going to look into it. Heather said she would like to bring her class." (Elaine's Journal, 16/11/86)

The boundaries of personal relationship also open up in a program of this nature.

> "I still have my rule about not socializing with individual students during a course because it still makes sense to me. I can't pretend, however, that I'm not closer to some than to others." (Ann's Journal, 7/1/87)
>
> "Sakthea lacks confidence. I try to give her (or enable her to get) more confidence. Ruth needs support and a hug. Henryk needs to be more daring with his use of the language. He mustn't get so hung up on his fear of making mistakes." (Pat's Journal, 11/1/87)
>
> "I don't know what Ruth's problem is. I tried to comfort her as best I could. I had her phone me in the evening. We talked for a while." (Pat's Journal, 11/12/86)

I cannot help but feel that a curriculum of response as opposed to a curriculum of prescribed content feels much more relevant to this area of instruction, namely language which is, in its essence, a phenomenon of response.

2. Teaching as making connections

In many ways, all teaching and learning could be described as making connections: between the old and the new, between the known and the unknown. Two of the teachers used the phrase "making connections" in their writing:

> Pat: "I am constantly making connections in my room. I know when students don't catch something. I know when to let it go and when to bring it back." (Journal, 14/12/86)

Pat seems to be using the term, in this instance, to describe the judging process which goes on in his mind as he observes and decides where and how to intervene and when not to.

Ann uses the phrase in describing a beginning literacy class:

> "With my guidance they picked up on some handwriting differences.... I was conscious of the fact I hadn't given them any strategies for learning except to group the letters by sound.... I think we made some connections and there were some understandings. I have no idea how much or what will be retained." (Journal, 24/11/86)

Ann's use of the term seems more in keeping with the general use of this phrase in learning and in teaching. In her own words, Ann is one who enables the learner to make connections. With her guidance, it was they who picked up some handwriting differences. There is such a lovely sense of mutuality in these words. One sees the teacher and the learner, step by step, moving along together. No one has clearly defined either the how of the process or the outcome thereof. Teaching and learning, in this context, are a process of moving along in a mutually agreed-upon direction, together.

Ann uses a term related to making connections to describe teaching, namely, "getting across".

> "I hope the student learned that I have some appreciation of other languages, and of the difficulties of learning English, and that some of them shared that by the end of the lesson. At least, that was one of the things I intended to *get across*, which I assume is teaching." (Journal, 24/11/86)

What does it mean to assume that getting across means teaching? In this passage, Ann clearly sees the value of communicating more than information and skill. She values the conveyance of an attitude of respect which is consistent with other writings by herself and the others in which they talk about the importance of building an atmosphere of trust in the classroom. Ann, in the above passage, names for us one of the ways in which that comes about in her room.

Other connections made by the teachers are very direct such as those made by introducing a learner to a person outside the institution who can support their learning and settling process in some way. Elaine describes inviting John to her house for Christmas Day and "fixing up" Dep and his son with her husband's aunt for the same day. (Journal, 5/1/87) Another time, she uses her staff swimming pass to take four students as guests. (Journal, 4/1/87) Concerned about her Polish student surrounded with Vietnamese classmates, she arranges for her Polish-speaking mother-in-law to volunteer in the classroom. (Journal, 26/11/86) She arranges a jam session between student musicians who have lost their equipment and a musician friend with connections in the business world. (Journal, 8/1/87)

Elaine not only lets down the boundaries between those she knows in her personal life and those whom she teaches but she also makes a real effort to connect the students with the fullest range of available community resources. A's pronunciation problems Elaine surmises could be related to a speech problem so she connects her with a therapist for assessment. (Journal, 13/11/86) Concerned with what will become of one of the learners when she completes her English course, she gives her suggestions as to what she can do and where she can go to increase her English while she is looking for work. (Journal, 21/1/87) The part we see Elaine taking in all of these examples is much more than teacher as program deliverer. Elaine's understanding of her work recognizes the complexity of the language learning process and the need to make use of every opportunity to extend the possibilities for the learner. Beyond that, there is every indication that her work is not only motivated in order to accomplish but out of a genuine, human respect and caring for the learner.

3. Teaching as drawing forth the learner

A very distinct and powerful group of verbs were used by the teachers to describe elements of their teaching, verbs in which the teacher was not the actor so much as the catalyst of the learner's own action. Such verbs included elicit, arouse, enable, evoke and motivate.

> Elaine: "Coffee and conversation. I love this time. This is where there is much more "eliciting" than "inputting". (Journal, 24/11/86)
>
> Pat: "I think if you can create something that arouses the curiosity of the students, there is a good chance that they will want to use language to ask questions or say something." (Journal, 14/11/86)
>
> Elaine: "I know that what we are doing about Christmas brings memories of Christmases they have experienced before. They seem to vacillate between sadness and happiness depending on the activity and what memories are evoked." (Journal, 9/12/86)

Whereas the preceding entries show us clearly the teachers' position of catalyst, we get a sense in the last entry of the risk and responsibility we feel in this approach to teaching, an approach in which we are never sure what will come forth or if we will be able to respond adequately. Christmas often evokes memories which are hard to bear. Those who are uncomfortable with emergent curriculum often use just such a scenario to defend the advantages of its less flexible but more predictable predecessors.

One high priority for all of these teachers was good self-esteem on the part of the learner since that was linked with the risk-taking behavior seen to coincide with successful language learning. Pat says, "I teach them in such a way as to not destroy their self-concept and to enable them to find and enrich their feelings about themselves." (Journal, 12/11/86) Elaine says, "I try to make him feel comfortable. I try to hit on areas where he is familiar." (Journal, 20/11/86) The teachers saw the relationship between self-esteem and security in the learning environment, as we see in Elaine's entry, also cited previously:

> "I made sure he was near the end (of my questions) so he knew the pattern and could do it.... I give many opportunities for him to feel he belongs and to feel success." (Journal, 19/11/86)

The teachers are always looking for ways to create interest and liveliness, to stimulate questions and suggestions, and to set up situations where the students will be motivated to participate actively in order to succeed at whatever task is at hand.

> "I make sure they aren't bored by switching gears often. I try to keep their minds always active, always wondering, always thinking, always questioning." (Elaine's Journal, 20/11/86)

> "I guess by 'style', I mean the way I motivate the students. I really try to make learning interesting and enjoyable for the students. This is very important.... I want to find out what the students' think is most important for them to learn, the kinds of things they find most useful in achieving (their goals)." (Pat's Journal, 12/11/86)

In the teacher's decision not to "deliver the goods" but rather to act as catalyst for the learner's naming, asking, and going after the language experiences they need, the learner is held as subject rather than object of the learning project.

4. Teaching as interpreting meanings

Interpreting, in E.S.L. circles, is normally construed as the activity of verbally transforming meanings from one language to another such that two persons of different linguistic backgrounds can communicate with each other. E.S.L. teachers, as we see in these journal passages, are engaged in several different kinds of interpreting, all of which have an important place in enabling learners to learn. Teachers interpret native-speaker English to easy English for the students and, conversely, interpret the students' broken, limited English into native-speaker English for other people needing to communicate with the learners. They interpret the needs of these learners to the administration and, often, to the public. Last, but not least, they are constantly called upon to interpret their experience of the learners while trying to improve the learning opportunities made available to them.

Pat gives us a very concrete example of the latter:

> "I guess I'm moving too fast with the class.... One of the students...said it all: "Pat today very papers!" (Journal 18/11/86)

Whereas that statement might have been meaningless elsewhere, Pat knew that he had started to cover content instead of respond to what the learners needed at a pace they could handle. He slowed down.

In an emergent curriculum in the E.S.L. context, every effort is made to get the students to express their experiences any way they can so that the teachers can provide the English words they need to do so verbally in English. For example, in Elaine's journal, we read: "(John) said (with actions) 'Hong's face was as smooth as a baby's bum'...so I told him the English expression." (Journal, 19/1/87) In this case, gestures were used to convey the meaning but, in some cases, the students use powerful words of symbol which, combined with facial expression, convey the meanings very well. Then, the one student's eyes had blazed and she had said "Fire inside", Elaine wrote, "She said that she was very angry." (Journal, 16/1/87)

The teachers also have to be interpreters between the institution and the learners. Gerta writes about explaining the institution's policies and procedures to the students, no easy feat given the complexity of such policies and the students' inexperience in the language. She writes, "I *think* it gave them a better grasp of what's going on at W.C.C.C.." (italics mine, Journal, 9/1/87)

In another instance, the teachers had discussed their frustration with trying to explain to their administrator the impossibility of writing a step-by-step directive manual for S.N. teachers. They had felt unable to interpret their experience to him and were searching for a middle ground both he and they could relate to. Elaine asks in her journal: "What do you think of a manual of "starting points"? (Journal, 4/12/86)

Sometimes, the teachers wondered if their interpreting efforts were too good. Elaine writes:

> "I realized even though the students are comfortable using and trying out English on me, they are not at ease in the 'real world'." (Journal, 26/11/86)

They also realized that there were times when they failed to interpret meanings or convey them accurately:

> Elaine: "On Thursday when Ann was there, we each took a group and asked, 'What did you learn?' and realized by their answers that they had interpreted it to mean, 'What did you do today?' Ann and I figured we need an interpreter to get the idea across." (Journal, 4/12/86)

Lastly, there was one journal entry by Elaine in which we see yet another layer of interpretation which the teacher does. In exploring issues of power in the classroom, I had asked her what it meant to her for a student to answer a question posed by 'the teacher'. She replied:

> "It could mean many things:
> -Oh, lucky me! I get to speak.
> -Oh, I hope I answer it correctly....
> -Am I understanding what she wants?
> -Should I try it or say that I don't understand...?
> -Should I ask her to repeat it?
> -Gee, I hate to speak in front of my classmates.
> -Have I heard this question before?
> -I get so nervous when she asks me a question."
> (Journal, 2/12/86)

Elaine interprets her students' experience in being asked a question as, variously, good fortune, hope, anxiety, doubt, fear, reluctance, and nervousness. In this awareness that more than language learning is going on during the interactions in the classroom, Elaine shows us her emerging consciousness concerning the hidden curriculum of the classroom experience. It is the struggle to teach out of such awareness that makes the S.N. curriculum so challenging and yet so potentially fulfilling at the same time.

5. Teaching as judging

Just as the teacher interprets, so is she or he called upon to judge, to assess and to decide. Based on initial contacts with the learners, the teachers assess their language level, their ability and their willingness to participate and manner of doing so. At the beginning of the course, Elaine writes:

> "...we reviewed vocabulary with cards. I was just getting a feeling (for) how much basic vocabulary they knew."
> (Journal, 12/11/86)

On the same night, Pat writes:

> "Generally, I spent the time in the morning getting to know my students, their listening comprehension and speaking ability." (Journal, 12/11/86)

In her judgment of the students, Gerta equates intelligence with willingness and ability to edit their own speech:

> "They seem very bright: correct themselves almost immediately." (Journal, 9/11/86)

Along with evaluating where the learners are in their journey towards English, the teachers have to make decisions about curriculum content which means they must place appropriate value on various possibilities and then priorize them. When I asked Ann what she wanted the students to retain, she replied:

> "...pride in their own language, appreciation of other languages, sensitivity to similarities and differences, and whatever they understood about how the writing systems work and the impact of that on learning another system." (Journal, 9/12/86)

Gerta's answer to the same question was to value cooperation among the students themselves:

> "The number one thing I want to see is total cooperation among students. When they work together in class, they should help each other, correct each other's mistakes, without feeling stupid, smug, etc. So far, I'm achieving this atmosphere, or that is, they are!" (Journal, 12/11/86)

Pat's response to this question covered a broader range of the meaning of language from structure, to tool, to attitude:

> "I teach my students English. I teach them words, phrases and sentences. I teach them to understand some of what they hear and to communicate in the English language. I teach them to varying degrees, depending on their willingness to learn and their capacity to learn, how to function in our society. I teach them tools that, hopefully, will enable them to continue to learn English. I teach them other things as well but these are hard to measure: happiness, tolerance, ability to share, to give, and to love." Amen." (Journal, 24/11/86)

Because the curriculum of the S.N. program is so open, the teachers' judgments concerning what is of value and what is not, and their willingness to allow and encourage the students to make these judgments, are very significant. Gerta tries to be present to the moment in judging where to go next:

> "Marion voiced that he was tired today. Based on this, I'm assuming the rest are too, even if they don't know it. I noticed that some were making mistakes at the end of the day that they weren't making in the morning." (Journal, 13/11/86)

Sometimes the teacher's judging must take into consideration the different vantage point of the learner concerning the meaning of the decision made by the teacher. The teachers, for example, in the S.N. program, without exception, recognize the so-called coffee break, or "tea party", as a highly significant part of the curriculum and so think nothing of time if language is being generated within that context. The learner coming from a different learning background, however, may attach no value to this time, simply seeing it as a break from learning, as we see below:

> Pat: "One student apologized for taking up so much time with the tea. I told them that it was no problem and that they could have tea or coffee anytime during the day." (Journal, 13/11/86)

In the course of a working day, the teachers occasionally were found judging their colleagues as well as the administration. Pat valued the opportunity to participate in the story workshops we did at the beginning of the research project because he judged as valuable to himself the stories of his colleagues. (Journal, 8/11/86) Elaine spoke with some frustration about a visiting teacher's judgment of her decision to value freedom in speaking over correctness with her students: "(The other teacher) was sort of stuck on accuracy." (Journal, 4/12/86) On another occasion, she sounded mildly annoyed at Ann's persistent search for understanding: "It seemed that Ann needs reasons for everything. I felt like saying 'Don't look so hard for answers and reasons. Just relax, enjoy, and be!' (Journal, 8/11/86)

Ann frequently gave voice to her frustration with the administration and, in the passage below, offers her evaluation of an administrator's decision. The staff had told the administrators how over-stressed they had been feeling about a number of things. Rather than deal with the problems, however, the administrators decided to offer a workshop on how to deal with stress:

> "It seems so ironic for us to be putting effort into survival tactics instead of dealing with the underlying problems." (Journal, 7/1/87)

Elaine speaks of her feelings about moving away from a set plan to a more dynamic notion of curriculum:

> "I was starting to feel guilty walking into the room with a plan, that I couldn't just walk in, get the materials from the students and go with it. More and more, I realize I need something to start with and also something to fall back on if I can't get a discussion going." (Journal, Feedback section, 1/12/86)

This feeling of guilt reminded me of my initial experience of talking with these teachers before the research program began. Because Ann and I had conceptualized the program to begin with, the others seemed to have the initial expectation that I would know a lot more than they and that I might find them wanting. When we try something new, we have an only semi-defined ideal against which we evaluate ourselves and it is not until we see through that ideal that we are able to give sharper definition to what we are trying to do. Elaine's statement above told me that she understood much more clearly than she had, the relationship between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experience.

6. Teaching as using tools

In the words of these teachers, we see the tool-making, tool-using, and tool-creating aspects of teaching. Both things and people become resources to the teaching. Elaine writes, "I used Christmas music today.... I had them walk around and when I stopped the music, I had them stop and talk to the person closest to them about a specific topic." (Journal, 4/12/86) Gerta refers to the videotape "The Gods Must Be Crazy":

> "I love using this film. It's nice to see them laugh. I hope this also gives them the confidence to sit through movies or T.V., if they haven't before." (Journal, 13/1/87)

Pat uses humor which he puts in opposition to "grinding it out in the corners," which I took to mean that which was humorless, that which was more like drudgery:

> "The humor was something I used to get the students focussed on something.... Much of what I do does not involve much humor. There are times when we "grind it out in corners" (if you know what I mean.)" (Journal, 20/11/86)

A male reader who obviously knows more about sports than I do clarified the meaning of this expression for him by saying that it referred to that action which is hard but unspectacular and may lead to a scoring opportunity. This was one instance where Pat's presumption that I would understand ("you know what I mean?") was in error.

As we have seen previously, the teachers also distinguish between classroom language and real language, which Pat sees as a tool to be exploited whenever possible:

> "I'm always ready to utilize real language whenever an

> opportunity comes up. I don't think there is any lesson I wouldn't stop to make use of 'real' language. Sometimes, something comes up which doesn't have anything to do with a particular theme we might be going at...." Journal, 14/11/86)

Also used are people, either outside the classroom such as on the field trip to the Senior Citizens' Centre, or, volunteers who come to the classroom to help. Elaine implies that she is herself a tool for the students to use: "....because I wasn't readily available all the time, there was more Vietnamese spoken." (Journal, 21/11/86)

One very important notion identified in this research project was the notion of starting points which none of us had ever before clearly identified in such a way as to be able to talk about it. For those of us in the project, the notion was born one day when someone said they were teaching vegetables and Ann asked why. The teacher looked startled and said it was on the curriculum, wasn't it? (She looked worried.) Ann checked and said that, actually, it was not. A discussion ensued in which we debated the merits of teaching the English words for vegetables to students who mostly bought their produce at Chinese or Vietnamese shops where the sales clerks spoke their language. Eventually, everyone concluded that vegetables were taught not for the words themselves but for the language activity which occurred around the preparation of vegetable soup and for discussions in which the eating habits of various countries could be compared:

> Pat: "Made vegetable soup in my class. It was delicious, brought in a lot of language." (Journal, 3/12/86)
>
> Elaine: "In my group, I did vegetables and fruits but, as I mentioned, I need starting points. This was a starting point for (the practice of grammatical structures and discussion of the differences between their countries and Canada.)" (Journal, 4/12/86)

Sometimes, commercial materials are used as starting points to get into broader, more immediately relevant languaging activities:

> Elaine: "I used a number of things today for starting points to conversation. A Conversation Book was good. The section we did was about where we live." (Journal, 18/12/86)
>
> "I'm seeing how I can use textbooks and materials as 'starting points to (get to) freewheeling." (Journal, 1/12/86)

Other starting points are not concrete items but rather conditions or openings the teacher creates for the students to walk through. Ann lists all the learnings a group of students had one day about each other's languages. She asks herself, "Did I teach that?"

and answers "I think so, by setting the conditions for them to make the discovery." (Journal, 24/11/86)

In the time of the research, there were two meetings between the S.N. staff and the administrator senior to Ann, both of which concerned the future of the S.N. program. This notion of starting points was regarded as an important one to communicate to the administration and Ann relates the teachers' efforts to communicate their unusual approach to an uncomprehending administrator. (She had decided not to speak, thinking that the teachers might have more success than she had had, if she remained silent.) She recounts:

> "Everybody (but Gerta) was talking about setting up situations that unfold (tho nobody used the word 'unfold'), expanding, following leads, seeing/creating opportunities. I kept wanting to say we are seeing and creating openings but I didn't." (Journal, 2/12/86)

As we have seen in the above example, starting points often presented themselves as resources, experiences, or openings. Sometimes, however, the teachers were very creative in dreaming up their own unique starting points. Elaine bubbles forth with an idea she has:

> "I have an idea! I have an idea! A mural all the way down the hall that grows, for conversation and vocabulary. I thought all the S.N.'s could participate: a residential area, a downtown area, a zoo, a park, etc. Those interested in mechanics could put together a garage and label it and attach it to the mural. Those interested in sewing could make a factory, etc." (Journal, 28/11/86)

(It is unfortunate that this idea was prevented from realization by maintenance staff who were uncomfortable with the possibility of damage to a new paint job.)

7. Teaching as taking and using power

Whereas the third section of this chapter is dedicated to an examination of the power relationships experienced by the teachers in this context, I nonetheless felt it necessary to include a few brief entries here. In this program, a lot of energy goes into encouraging the learners to see and use whatever power they can in the learning situation, believing that the learners' situation in the classroom parallels their situation in society. In both, the language learner experiences difficulties due to a lack of functional ability in English and a lack of knowledge of how things work socially, culturally, and politically. The philosophy of the S.N. program rests on the assumption that, if in the classroom, language learners can see themselves as able to influence their environment in their own interests, they will feel confident in asserting themselves similarly in the society at large.

However, this is easier said than done when teachers are accustomed to being in control and learners are accustomed to them being there. Many journal entries spoke of the teachers taking and using the power of their role to resolve conflicts unilaterally, force students to do things and reward or punish students for their behavior, all of which were revealed in the nightly journal entries. For example, when one student creates a problem for others, the teacher feels obliged to intervene:

> "Some of the students complained that A always answered before they got a chance. Also, that she interpreted in Vietnamese when they didn't want her to. I talked to A when it was her interview." (Elaine's Journal, 1/12/86)

It was easiest for Elaine to intervene. Was it best? What choices did she have?

In the following entry, Pat says he rewards the students but in reading this carefully, I wonder if what he really means is that he acknowledges the learners, which has a very different tone in relation to power than does the idea of "reward", which implies fulfilment of the will of the one in power, rather than recognition of one's effort:

> "When the students use the language they have learned, I reward them. Maybe I give them "five" or put my arm around them or say something that shows them and the other students that I have noticed that they have remembered or had the confidence to try using the language." (Journal, Feedback section, 20/1/87)

> There was also a lack of awareness in parts of the journals of some of the contradictions to be found in attempting to move in new directions as yet only partially understood. An example from Gerta's journal follows:

> "I explained my philosophy of teaching in regards to doing homework, etc. I explained very generally that, as far as I'm concerned, they're adults and are responsible for their own learning strategies. I *allow* students to make their own decisions. *As long as they learn*, I don't care how." (Italics mine, Journal, 1/9/87)

In this entry, Gerta's use of the word "allow" with a condition attached is indicative of what is probably the reality for all of us, that as much as we try to get the learners to assume responsibility for the manner and direction of their own learning, we still accept the final responsibility which means that when we do not approve of their decisions, we are quite prepared to step back in and redirect everything.

8. Teaching as freewheeling

The birth of this notion of "freewheeling" was, for me, the most exciting moment of this research. Pat had used the term from time to time in his journal and in our weekly conversations and always he said it with joy in his voice. We began to ask him to define what he meant but, initially, he could not. Here are three excerpts from his journal, two of which use the term and all of which give us some information about the concept:

> "Brought students to the front of the room...and went through my early morning routine: day, month, greeting, responses, weather, where are you from? From this (about twenty-five minutes), other things came up and I *went with them.*" (Journal, 13/11/86)
>
> "Instead of having (the volunteer) answer to a few students, I decided to have us all sit in a circle and all *get into it.* What happened was quite wonderful. (The students started asking questions) and from there it *took off.* We talked for an hour. *Everyone participated.* We all *freewheeled.* Everyone, it appeared, was very *interested* in what was being said. They were listening and *picking up from where the last person left off.* I found that it was one of those great times in the class when I *didn't constantly have to be controlling* the situation." (Journal, 7/1/87)
>
> "Because I had been through (the preparation for a field trip) before, I had a *lot of ideas and a lot of confidence* in teaching this particular lesson. I was freewheeling in my teaching and later, the students freewheeled." (Italics mine, Journal, 11/1/87)

From these three passages, we get a good deal of information as to the teaching style and learning experience Pat labels as "freewheeling". It is spontaneous. (Things 'come up' and the teacher 'goes with' them.) Everyone participates ('gets into it'). The class has a momentum and energy of its own. (It 'took off'.) There is a high level of interest. There is no one person in control.

The others were excited by this notion because we all felt that we knew what he meant, "sort of", although none of us, initially, could name the experience. Elaine says:

> "This idea of 'freewheeling' is so important. It's neat when they can carry on a discussion.... It's so different from just regurgitating." (Journal, 4/12/86)

Being expected, however, to 'freewheel' in someone else's class was not necessarily as eagerly embraced. Ann recalls:

> "Pat had seemed to want me to wing it and certainly didn't want to give me a lesson plan." (Journal, 26/11/86)

The idea of freewheeling was one I also found exciting because it seemed to go beyond the kind of teaching and learning experience found in mainstream communicative competence curricula. Ann also noted this transcendence:

> "I understand 'freewheeling' in two non-exclusive senses. One is the kind of group discussion with high participation Pat and Ken frequently report. The other is the creative use of the language, the going beyond that which has been learned and beyond Krashen's routines and patterns, and, based on what has been acquired, inventing as necessary in order to communicate." (Journal, 8/1/87)

In the notion of 'freewheeling', we find the liveliness of real languaging, of language as process, rather than the static nature of language as thing. Language becomes the medium of human engagement rather than an object of distanced study. It would appear that the experience of 'freewheeling' as described by the teachers with such joy and fascination is the high point of the S.N. curriculum. Although not a consistent experience within the program by any means, it is nonetheless recognized as the experience the teachers seek to create.

9. Teaching as mediating the immigrant newcomer's entry into Canadian society

As mediators, teachers find themselves often between the lived world of the immigrant newcomer and that of those accustomed to living within the systems of this society. On the one hand, they feel the need to enculturate the learners, to teach them what they need to function successfully in our society. On the other hand, they rebel against the common assumption in our society that all of the adjustment is the responsibility of the immigrant. First, we see some of the entries which illustrate the desire to assist people to settle:

> "I took the other group to the bank to show them how to fill out deposit and withdrawal slips and also how to feel comfortable in the bank." (Elaine's Journal, 3/12/86)
>
> "Hoa, with amazing gestures, told me Le had her period. They asked me the word for period, sanitary napkins, tampon. They had never used tampons so asked me how (oh, boy!)" (Elaine's Journal, 13/11/86)

Elaine noted cultural differences and needed adjustments which no doubt explained the slowness or lack of progress the teachers had witnessed for some students:

> "With little or no education, they are not used to studying." (Journal, 13/11/86)

She related one tale, the theme of which no doubt effects several unknowing families with serious legal repercussions:

> "(A student) said she gets very angry and hits the kids on the legs with a stick. I cringed. I'm going to talk to her about this. We started talking about discipline. John used a belt. Haimonot said that in Eritrea, she used a belt but in Canada she uses her hand. Do says he talks. A related a story about her husband leaving the children alone while she was working. They started a fire. The husband was outside hitting the children with a belt. The father was taken to the police station and told in Canada he couldn't do that. We discussed this, that children should never be left alone." (Journal, 22/1/87)

Another day, she tells of receiving a Christmas present and, while expressing her gratitude, telling the students that they should not feel obligated to bring gifts. Whereas the previous passages are all fairly clear as to the need for the students to know the Canadian ways, the last example seems to point also to the teachers' needing to become aware of the meaning of certain actions in other cultures. A sense of obligation may be present in one culture while, in another, it may be more a question of dignity.

There needs to be an adjustment when different cultures come into contact with one another but this should be a two-way process as we see in the following account:

> "Lynn had come into my class for ten minutes and they had asked her several questions. "How old are you? How much do you weigh? etc. She was shocked. The first thing she said was, 'I hope you have taught your students what's appropriate.' I told her I was happy that they had talked and asked anything. She also was not pleased that, when she said that she had two jobs, one of my students said 'You big money!' That ten minutes just didn't go well. I started thinking: maybe I'd better be more concerned (with) an appropriate way to deal with new people. Also, other teachers don't realize what S.N. students are." (Journal, 16/12/86)

Elaine saw the need to mediate between the guest and the learners to protect the latter from those who do not understand their ways of thinking. When it comes to culture, it is not possible to keep it from the classroom nor would one choose to do so. However, one does have to make a decision as to whose responsibility it is to learn and adapt. One's teaching would vary accordingly between teacher-knows-and-tells-while-student-adapts, or, everyone-knows-something-and-everyone-adapts.

Ann's desire was to confront the society within the institution itself, to transform an understanding of education which gave administrators all the power and learners almost none, with teachers as mere agents of delivery, to one in which everyone had their say and made a difference:

> "This meeting with (her supervisor) is our chance to prove that democracy and participation can work." (Journal, 26/11/86)
>
> "That is the thrust of this program: freedom and release.... Feeling more and more that S.N. should be bilingual and non-institutional, at least in the first stages. (Journal, 25/11/86)

Ann did not accept without resistance a system which she felt deprived adult learners of their rights. The following passage is taken verbatim from her performance appraisal of Nov. 10, 1986 and is repeated here as quoted in the profiles at the beginning of this chapter:

> "Ms. ______ has developed a somewhat narrow view of E.S.L. and of the institution as a whole. If she is to be successful as a senior-instructor and continue in this role, a broader perspective is required." (From photocopy inserted in her journal at 18/11/86)

After fifteen years of service in the department, a department which she had in fact developed from the days the institution was born, this performance evaluation was left in her mailbox for her to find and read.

Elaine challenges the system outside the institution:

> "Everytime I have a different person in the classroom or take my students places, I feel like I am educating society and educating them." (Journal, Now the Open Moment section, 9/1/87)

She cites a specific example wherein they visited the Senior Citizens' Recreation Centre where the director spoke slowly and very loudly to all the learners. He even asked one woman where milk came from, to which the obliging learner replied, "In a box, from Superstore." (He then corrected her with a loud "cow".) Of this incident, Elaine goes on to write:

> "Oh, to lessen the gap between the classroom and the outside world. How can we help society to communicate better with these people? Slowly and loudly is definitely not the whole story." (Journal, Now the Open Moment section, 15/1/87)

Pat takes it one step further in his commitment to address issues of racism as he can in his teaching:

> "I hear and see the racism. I have begun to take up the fight and am learning the anger that arises in such fights. This awareness makes my resolve even greater to do a better job with my students, to hand over the power or control to them, to get them on their feet. With confidence and the will to want a piece of the pie, this could be a great country of ours!" (Journal, Feedback section, undated last entry)

As we look at all three of these teachers' willingness to challenge the systems in which they work and live, we can feel the strength of the relationship they have developed with the learners. The dialogue must be there because, not only have they "taught" but also have they listened and heard.

In the role of mediator, there is sometimes the need to conceal that which the other would not understand. Pat says, "Actually, I sort of play it safe when I have a visitor in the room. What you see is not always what it's like." (Journal, 18/12/86) The perceived outsider is not necessarily from outside the institutions. It is often felt to be necessary to conceal reality from the administrators as well as we see in Gerta's entry:

> "It's not always necessary to tell administrators everything, but at the same time, you assume total responsibility for the situation that conflicts.... Extreme example: Your student misses the last block of the day, gives you what you believe is a good excuse, you don't want to mark him absent because he already has seven absences. He steals something during that time and it eventually comes out that, according to the records, he was sitting in class. Instead of the administration backing me up, guess who would lose her job." (Journal, 8/1/86)

TEACHING, IN CONCLUSION

In reviewing these patterns in the passages which have allowed us to see them, we are shown many dialectics at work, among them, presence and absence, revealing and concealing, responding and choosing to ignore, taking power and giving power, pleasure and pain, using and being used. Living in the midst of these seeming opposites, teachers find themselves teaching, sometimes as art, sometimes as technique. They are sometimes "teacher" and sometimes "learner". They experience success and failure, joy and frustration. Teaching in the S.N. program seems to offer a fuller range of experience, or at least the right to acknowledge a fuller range of experience than do most programs and, as a reader, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity afforded me by these four teachers who so aptly and willingly opened windows on the nature of their daily teaching experiences through the pages of their journals. Each of these windows gives me an opportunity to look into the mirror of my own practice and question what I find there. What are we doing? Why? In whose interests? To what end? What is the common good?....

III. THE MEANING OF POWER

In the search for teacher meanings in this E.S.L. program, it was relatively easy to name teaching and language as two of the categories of search, easy in that the teachers saw these as obviously relevant to their work. The notion of power as an area of questioning was initially met, by three of the four teachers, with quizzical, uneasy looks and expressions of "What do you mean?", a surprising response when one considers the program intents listed in the paragraphs which follow. In spite of the initial discomfort felt with this line of inquiry, it did yield some fruitful insights into the power relationships within the program and some of the effects these had upon the teachers and their work. In that E.S.L. is seen increasingly as a field of education and training designed to prepare the newly-arrived immigrant to participate in Canadian society, the question of power seemed like a necessary one to raise. Participation implies acting out of one's own power. Indeed, four out of eight of the stated intents of the S.N. Program imply a need for power, as we will see below. To what degree, I wondered, did this program encourage and allow learners to develop a sense of their own power in this society?

Ann and her colleague Susan, in the S.N. Manual, Volume 1 (undated curriculum document), cite three factors as "ingredients to successful adult learning" :

> "-Participation, in the sense of creating our own experience of life.
> -Commitment, in the sense of singleminded dedication, the ability to set aside all forces which would mitigate against the intended learning; an 'in-touch-ness' with lived priorities.
> -Freedom, in the sense of free-to-be-me, the human factor. Humans have the capacity and the will to be fully human, to experience freedom, dignity, ability and selfhood." (p.18)

The program intents are listed as follows:

> "-develop self-esteem,
> -be free to be themselves, in their own language and in English,
> -move towards integration into society,
> -participate fully in whatever they do,
> -develop positive personal relationships and a sense of community,
> -move towards communicative competence,
> -develop their innate ability to learn,
> -become committed towards their own goals." (p.26)

Both these intents and "ingredients to successful adult learning" speak to the program's overall intention to empower the learners.

A. The Nature of Power

For purposes of this study, power is defined as the ability to intentionally influence one's environment in one's own interest, either individually or collectively. In my own life and work, I am conscious of the importance attached to the prepositions which often follow this noun. We may say power over, power with, or power within, for example. In studying the teachers' journals, I was interested to see how they saw the nature of power, when and under what circumstances they felt they had power, how they related to it, and to whom they attributed power, either in harmony with their own experience of it, or in opposition to it. I also wanted to see to what extent their writing revealed the accomplishment of their stated-program intents of enabling power for the learners.

Almost all references to power in the journal were restricted to the act of teaching and learning within the classroom or the act of administering that enterprise. There were words and phrases which indicated who was in power, how they experienced that, how they used it, and to what effect. Other references described the environment or context of feeling in power. One teacher made several comments which implied the arbitrary or accidental nature of power whereas other references seemed to indicate that power had the nature of something which could be given or taken away. Most often, the picture is one of power equating with control or authority *over* others.

In the following excerpts, I have used italics to highlight those words which give us a sense of the various teachers' views of power structures within the program.

> Ann: "(An academic upgrading instructor) and I had an interesting talk today comparing E.S.L. and Academic Upgrading, both *under* Matthew. Everything keeps coming back to the department head's style and values. We've *got to get and keep in touch with* John! (Journal, 11/12/86)

In the above, we see an hierarchical power structure wherein the teacher's only avenue to power is through the department head (John) to his supervisor (Matthew). The words "get and keep in touch with" paint an image of the distance Ann feels between the teachers and the administrators. She recognizes the importance of on-going meaningful communication as a prerequisite to influence. As the administrator, Ann felt she, in turn, was also the avenue through which the teachers could express their concerns and influence decision-making and thus often expressed her frustrated attempts to open up such communication.

Pat sees a relationship between power and voice in the following:

> "Had a meeting after school with John. I had a lot more to say about S.N.'s than I would have had one month ago. Must be the result of our project. I talked too much though. I wished that I wouldn't have said so much.... I interrupt too often and give my own views." (Journal, 3/12/86)

On the one hand, he seems to feel good about having something to say and having had the confidence to say it but on the other hand, seems fearful about the consequences of giving these views. There is power in giving voice to one's ideas but it can be dangerous to exercise that power.

Elaine and Gerta were primarily concerned with power as it directly affected the teaching of the classes. Gerta takes a no-nonsense, utilitarian approach:

> "I could...rein*force* students to take responsibility for each other all the time but this is a long process and, depending on the personalities, ten weeks is not always long enough to *implement* this." (Journal, Feedback section, 26/1/87)

(In this excerpt, Gerta was explaining why she felt it necessary to be in control herself rather than "train" the students to be responsible for each other.) She not only shows us her view that power and force go together and that it is the teacher's role to implement control one way or another, she also raises the question of the relationship between power and responsibility. The one who takes power had de facto responsibility.

Elaine reveals something of her understanding of this same relationship:

> "While we were talking in English, John (a Polish student) listened and basically understood but when it was all Vietnamese, I didn't know what to do about John. I know he felt left out." (Journal, 26/11/86)

Implied in these words is the ability, and indeed responsibility, for the teacher to use her power by intervening on behalf of the student who does not understand. That she does not do so may indicate that she questions the appropriateness of using her power in this situation. She could have intervened by asking the Vietnamese students to speak English, thus including John, or she could have taught John to ask them to speak English. That she did neither but doubted herself for doing nothing indicates the ambiguity teachers feel towards their boundaries of power. (If this conversation had been in the classroom rather than the corridor, I have no doubt she would have intervened in some manner to change the situation.)

Whereas most of the teachers' references pointed to the shared understanding of the teacher's right and responsibility to control classroom behavior, there were occasional references which showed that there were unwritten rules governing the granting of that power to the teacher by the students:

> Ann: "What got to me was that *nobody paid attention to my handouts* apparently because I hadn't given them a specific task with a worksheet to fill out." (Journal, 10/12/86)

It would appear that, in this situation, the teacher's right to control is given in exchange for the teacher's willingness to adhere to the expectations of the students, which suggests that the real power here belongs, not to the teacher as a person, as it might first appear, but rather to the situation in which both teacher and student have predefined roles and duties.

The rights and responsibilities of the teacher are not necessarily respected in like manner by everyone who has power to effect decisions. Sometimes, we are surprised at the source of power in program decisions. The reader will recall an earlier reference to Elaine's excitement over a mural she wanted the students to make in the hallway. As she was rereading her own journal and making entries in the Journal Feedback section, she writes what became of this idea:

> "I just came across my mural idea. I was asking one of the maintenance men what to use that wouldn't hurt the wall. He said "Nothing! Why wreck a newly-painted wall when you'll be out of here by the end of March?" (He) sort of shot it down. I get lots of ideas and I don't carry through on many of them. Then I get disappointed in myself."
> (Journal, Feedback section, 25-28/11/86)

In theory, this decision was the teacher's to make with appropriate authorization from the administration. In actuality, a maintenance man decided that four months was not long enough to justify the possibility of tape damage to the new paint job. (She could have used a type of putty designed for that purpose and there would have been no damage to the wall.) Power is not always exercised as it appears to be. One has to wonder why she accepted this decision without question.

Another expression of power I hear often at this institution, usually from one administrator, appeared in Pat's journal:

> "I will try *to get inside the students' heads* more, through interpreters, if I can, or by whatever means." (Journal, 11/11/86)

Whereas I believe Pat is trying to express his desire to better understand how his students think and what they need, I am very uncomfortable with this expression as it seems to violate the sanctity of a person's inner space. What is the significance of saying this rather than saying, "I wish I could better understand the needs of the learners in this class"?

Pat gives us several expressions which appear to point to his view of power as something mysterious and somewhat out of his control but which is to be seized when the moment presents itself. Here is one:

> "I want real language but.... it's hard to get.... I am always ready to utilize real language when an opportunity *comes up* in class." (Journal, 14/11/86)

In the above, he waits for opportunities to "come up" but in another example, he admits to having some measure of control over this process:

> "I realize that not all people like to learn in the kind of atmosphere that I *enable to come about* in my classroom." (Journal, 29/11/86)

These words imply that opportunities do not just happen; they are *allowed* to happen and, beyond that, *enabled* to happen.

In another example, Pat acknowledges both his power and his desire to share that with the learners but seems contradictory in his understanding of his relationship with the learners:

> "I am a participant in my classes. I am in many ways an equal partner. I value each one of my students and actually feel privileged to be an equal.... There are many times that I take control... and I have no problem giving up my control to the students. (Journal, 29/11/86)

In relation to his volunteer helpers, he also says "I let them take over when the flow is going in their direction." (Journal, 29/11/86) How can one discuss equality when one has mastery of the common language and the others do not, when one *can* take control or give it and the others cannot? This same self-delusion has led me into situations which were very painful to me and to the learners with whom I was working for I had succeeded in leading them to believe that we had equal power and when I reached in and took over in situations where I felt it to be necessary, they felt betrayed. I have learned to accept that a certain amount of power goes with my role in the systems in which I work and I choose not to delude myself or the learners that it can be otherwise in certain contexts. The question is not whether one has such power as a teacher but rather how one is ethically to use that in the best interests of the learners and the society into which they come as new Canadians.

Pat made one additional reference to power which is significant, I believe, for seeing what makes the shift possible between "power over" and "power with": "Once the rapport is established, students work with you rather than for you." (Journal, 7/12/86) In this example, we see the layers of power within the teaching-learning relationship wherein, at one and the same time, the teacher can have and be seen to have control but also not feel the need to use it.

Ann draws our attention to the relationship between trust, power and freedom:

> "Tuesday I was very uncomfortable at the meeting regarding the E.S.L. resource center. Unlike other gatherings with many of the same faces, I felt no sense of community, little trust, and *so much unsaid.* The feeling that I've had off and on for the past few days came back. I

> didn't feel free to be me, just like I don't at school. I've been saying that "they" took the freedom away, but at other times....I know that isn't so." (Journal, 21/1/87)

Although Ann is talking about the power relationships between the teachers and the administration, it is interesting how closely the teachers' feelings of frustration and powerlessness parallel those of the learners as they encounter the structures of power in our society. The curriculum of the S.N. program names community, self-confidence, and freedom as primary intents. These same intents could be said to be appropriate ones for the teachers to set for themselves in their workplace. Ann, in the entry preceding, feels paralyzed and uncomfortable in this situation and cannot say what she wants to say about her feelings. Her last statement indicates her own sense of accountability for this unpleasant situation.

B. Experiences of Power "Brought" by the Teachers to the Situation

Each person brings to any given situation all of his or her history and the personality developed within the experiences of that history. Learners and teachers alike bring their securities and their insecurities, their confidence and their lack of it. Of the four teachers in this study, two made references back to certain experiences of power they had had outside the teaching situation. Gerta expresses below the feelings she had about teacher control when she was a learner and the effect that has had on her teaching:

> "So I understand my students and how they feel and how their needs differ. Trying to force me into a mold was a waste of time and just made me angry. I think I'm careful about not doing this to people I teach because of this experience." (Journal, Feedback section, 26/1/86)

She goes on to note that homework and tests were the points of rebellion for her. In spite of her belief in not "forcing" her students, it is interesting to note her following comment made early on in the research just after the story workshop:

> "I was surprised at the amount of control I expect to have as a teacher, or at least it showed in my stories." (Journal, 7/11/86)

Pat weaves a picture of himself as a person lacking in self-confidence and therefore feeling a lot of empathy with students who manifest the same quality. He struggles with taking control and giving it back. He tells an interesting story from his childhood which seems to relate to this struggle:

> "When I was fifteen years old, I was invited to play hockey for a team that was very good and in a very competitive league. Because the jump up to the league was so threatening to me, I changed my whole style of play. The

> coach trained me to be a checker. Most of my time was spent skating and honing my defensive skills. The coach wasn't interested in me scoring. I became a very good defensive player, *but it wasn't me.* In my parish league, I had been a freewheeler, very offensive. As a defensive player, I didn't enjoy the game. I was nervous when I got the puck and couldn't do anything with it. During the middle of the year, we got a coaching change. The new coach wanted me to be more offensive. With his encouragement, I got my confidence back. I can remember the game when I decided to freewheel. I took the puck and kept it for four or five minutes. I didn't pass to my teammates. I just skated and skated with the puck. No one could get it away from me. I became one of the best stickhandlers in the league."
> (Journal, 9/12/86)

What would happen if E.S.L. learners "took the puck" and refused to give it up? Maybe they too would become some of the "best in the league".

We see this metaphor resurrected as Pat describes his classroom:

> "There were times when the conversation slowed or when things were said that needed more elaboration. Then, I would take control and give it direction but quickly pass the control back to the students or (the volunteer)."
> (Journal, 7/1/87)

Whereas these examples clearly give us a sense of his intention for the students to have as much control as possible, there were other instances when his words revealed a more dependent scenario, for example: "I think that I will be looking more at what I'm *doing for* the students." (Journal, 8/11/86) Doing for the students over a period of time would create a dependent relationship whereas participation, as defined in the program intents, moves the students more towards an independent or interdependent status in relationship to the teacher in the classroom. Pat's struggle between giving power and taking it back may have been rooted in his own experience as a learner of ice hockey.

C. The Power Relationship Between Teachers and Learners

Three distinct moments emerged in consideration of this relationship. By far the most common was the teacher's control, absolute or subtle, over the learner. Second, was the student's control of the situation, of which the teacher was a part, and rarely, there were examples of a genuinely shared power relationship between the teacher and the students.

Occasionally, power accrued to the teacher not by design but simply due either to the perceived role of the teacher or to the expertise which went with that role.

> Elaine: "Just by the students one at a time standing in

> front of the class and me sitting down makes me realize that there is control or power in just standing in front of the class without saying anything." (Journal, 9/1/87)
>
> Gerta: "Essentially my role as the teacher during that classtime was: a) a dictionary, b) an authority on Canada's laws, instead of the "teacher" as the absolute authority." (Journal, 6/1/87)

In the latter, we see the teacher as one who knows and is, therefore, accorded power. In the former, we see the power of standing in front of a group of seated people, traditionally the place of a teacher.

The teacher's active control of the learners was seen in three primary ways: by force, by manipulation or by persuasion, as well as by the learner's dependence upon the teacher, sometimes described as unavoidable, at other times arguably so. Here are some samples of varying degrees of force or imposition by the teacher upon the learners:

> Gerta: "Usually, I *never allow* politics or religion to be discussed...." (Journal, 19.11/86)
>
> Ann: "He was absent and near his 7-day limit which would become a good excuse to *terminate* him." (Journal, 8/1/87)
>
> Gerta: "I believe I'm trying to give them a means of making sense of English in that I'm *forcing them* to ask me questions about things they don't understand." (Journal, 6/1/87)
>
> Pat: "Sometimes, I am not as sensitive to my students as I should be. I plunge ahead, *pushing too hard and asking too much from them.* Sokthea told me that she feels sick everyday. She's too tired and can't sleep and her head is hot inside." (Journal, 19/1/87)
>
> Pat: "My control was wishy-washy....I finally *had to take it back* and...*lay down the law.* I *threatened to get rid of* Chi and Milagros.... I had to *jump on* them. (Journal, 29/11/86)

These are strong words. To allow necessitates power. Termination is to bring to an end, a term learners often find hard to hear in that their bilingual dictionaires often translate the word as "kill". Forcing, pushing, laying down the law, threatening---all of these terms leave no doubt as to who is in control in the classroom.

Less strong but equally clear expressions are found in the idea of "having someone do something", "letting someone do something", and "trying someone somewhere". In these expressions, we see the learner as object, being manipulated at the will of the teacher who is subject.

> "I *had the students do* some writing on the board." (Journal, 12/11/86)
>
> "A Polish man wanted to move to a lower class so I *tried him* in Elaine's class." (Journal, 14/11/86)
>
> "I *had my students work* in pairs, good chance for me to stand back and *observe them*." (Journal, 13/11/86)
>
> "The students were tired so I just *let them sit*." (Journal, 20/11/86)

In other instances, teachers imply the use of persuasion or manipulation to ensure control. Elaine speaks of John being "reluctant" to paint and then writes, "Once he got started, he seemed to enjoy himself." (Journal 27/11/86) We are not told how he happened to start doing what he did not want to do. Similarly, Pat speaks of his certainty that recalcitrant class members "will come 'round" and suggests that he might be giving one such learner "too much too fast. Got to get close to him...see if I can relax him a bit more." (Journal, 13/11/86)

Whether obvious or subtle, such power demands responsibility and Elaine struggles with the amount of responsibility she takes for the learners in her class:

> "(I have) the sensation of wanting (the students') lives to be okay and maybe not putting enough emphasis on them making it okay but on me making it okay and influencing their lives. Grandiose, eh?" (Journal, Feedback section, 1/12/86)

In this entry, we see Elaine's awareness of the need for people to be accountable for "making" their own lives better yet her anguish in knowing that some are, as yet, unable to do so. In my experience, it is a perennial struggle for conscientious E.S.L. teachers to know where to draw their boundaries of responsibility in relation to the learners.

Dependency of the learner upon the teacher appeared to be an issue in this program. On the one hand, the whole intention was to create independence for the learners by enabling their language learning and settlement process. On the other hand, a person who speaks little or no English begins from a position of dependence on those who can assist. Pat writes:

> "Many S.N. students don't know where they are going. They

> are almost totally dependent on the teacher to 'quarterback' the process." (Journal, 18/11/86)

Ann, in one entry, accepts that "dependency is a normal and perhaps necessary stage in settlement" (Journal, 7/1/87) but in another recognizes a profound difference in two of the teachers' styles in this regard:

> "(I feel) that Doreen is too controlling with this class.... There's something different about the control in Doreen's and Helen's classes that goes beyond the differences in levels and nationalities. What??? Maybe it is that Helen holds them as able to be accountable for themselves? On the basis of Doreen's negative experiences, she doesn't seem able to." (Journal, 17/12/86)

In spite of the obvious power the teachers had over the students, there were also some accounts of the students appearing to have control of the situation, often because the teachers allowed it to happen and sometimes because they took it:

> Ann: "(The students) have all kinds of ways of taking control, many of which operate at the subconscious level and may not be recognized by them or the teacher." (Journal, 7/1/87)
>
> Pat: "My students always *have a say* in their learning. I respect their knowledge and experiences.... I am always ready to hand over my *reign of power* to other "teachers" in the classroom." (Journal, 21/11/86)
>
> Elaine: "If I'm doing an activity and the students start questioning and it goes in a different direction, I go with it." (Journal, 20/11/86)

Whereas these three seemed usually happy when they saw the students in control of the learning situation, Gerta seemed somewhat ambivalent. She sometimes seems positive, as in, "A couple of times today, they drew me into their conversations...." (Journal, 18/11/86) and "They manipulated me as a tool for gaining information they wanted instead of me giving them information I think they want." (Journal, 6/1/87) She also tried to give the learners the language tools they needed to take control of certain situations:

> "Nothing of consequence happened today although I taught my students the sentences 'Please, I'm an adult. Please don't treat me like a child.'... They used it today when I oversimplified a concept for them...." (Journal, 4/1/87)

On other occasions, Gerta felt the risk attached to letting the students take control.

> "I've had this class take more control than any other and I've seen some of the drawbacks. I had three or four very vocal people and they often would take the reins. The others were left out. Only when I included the others did they concentrate on the conversations and questions. It is very valuable for the students to assume control in the classroom but it's my responsibility to make sure everyone benefits...." (Journal, Feedback section, 26/1/87)

Why is it only Gerta's responsibility to see that everyone benefits? What difference would it make if the whole group accepted that responsibility? Under what conditions would they do so?

There were other moments which indicated shared participation in decision-making. Pat writes:

> "Actually, I get my energy from my students when I look into their eyes and see them smile, etc. This afternoon, I started *working with* them rather than *teach to* them. We were together...." (Journal, 12/11/86)

This is a good example of power shared between the teacher and the learners. Another example follows when the teacher decides that negotiated decision-making is the order of the day:

> Ann: "After the break was supposed to start, I told them they could quit and we negotiated the start time for the next class." (Journal, 22/11/86)

In the next excerpt, the teacher does not force the students but simply reminds them of a decision they had already made:

> Elaine: "Using Yen as an interpreter, I asked the students if they had changed their mind about (using) 100% English (in the classroom) because in the last few days, they had been speaking a lot of Vietnamese. They said 'sorry, sorry, teacher, we want 100%.' I told them they were adults and any decision they made was fine with me. They still stuck to 100%. (Journal, 28/11/86)

In the preceding examples, we have seen three different aspects of the power relationship existing between teacher and learner. Most of the time, power belongs to the teacher and is shared at his or her discretion. Occasionally, the learners take control. At other times, the program intent of shared power seems to be realized. What I find interesting overall is the joy the teachers experience when there is "shared power as opposed to the sense of reluctant acceptance of taking over and the struggle of feeling heavy responsibility for responding to all the difficulties presented by the learners' lives.

D. The Power Relationship Among Students

In addition to the power relationship existing between teacher and learner, there were a couple of instances in which we see something of the power relationship amongst the students themselves:

> Gerta: "Those people who take absolute control will lose out in the end, because the other students tend to resent them. Meaning? They extend control to their outside lives too!" (Journal, Feedback section, 28/1/87)

> Elaine: "If we're in a semi-circle, John will pull his chair in only part way. The students *insist* that he be part of the semi-circle." (Journal, 15/12/86)

In the first entry, we see the negative result of students assuming control over other students. In the second, we anticipate the positive result of the group collectively responding to an individual in order to enable him to feel like part of the group. Although we see only two examples here of the kind of power relationship existing among the students, it is sufficient to remind us that it is not only the teacher who has the power to influence the quality of experience learners have in the program nor does the accountability rest solely upon the learner for his or her own learning. Every member of the group has the potential power to influence the experience of each other member of the group for better or for worse. From a planning perspective, the S.N. curriculum's intent of community-building seems, therefore, a justifiable one.

E. The Power Relationship Between Teachers and Administrators

There was a strong sense of powerlessness, alienation and mistrust on the part of the teachers towards the administrators. Perhaps because Ann, as a middle manager, tried very hard to be a buffer between the administration and the teachers, she had by far the most numerous entries expressing these feelings. Here are some samples:

> "Matthew (the administrator over the department head) was willing to help solve technical problems but on the big issues said that was the way it was and was going to be, and he accepted responsibility for his own decisions."
> (Journal, 8/11/86)

> "I'm feeling paralyzed. I can't get another job by wishing, but I'm not doing anything. Until that last conversation with (the department head) I still felt some hope for

> turning things around here. Now, I don't know." (Journal, 8/11/86)
>
> "After the meeting with Matthew, a few of the teachers discussed what to do next. One of them who still wants to meet with the President suggested a ballot rather than another meeting.... John opposed it saying there was no point. I was suddenly struck by something he said. I looked at him and said 'You really don't see anything wrong, do you?' 'No, I don't!' he replied. About to burst into tears, I excused myself...." (Journal, 8/11/86)
>
> "Had coffee with (the counsellor) who says he's bothered by all the pain around him and insists I'm needed here. Says 'they' need to feel in control." (Journal, 26/11/86)

The paralysis, pain and frustration we see in the preceding are joined by a sense of voicelessness and of voices not heard as illustrated in the two following examples:

> Ann: "The kind of sharing (among teachers) that is destructive is bitch sessions that don't lead to action." (Journal, 11/11/86)
>
> Pat: "(I) went to a meeting at (the other campus). (The) meeting was long and I didn't say anything. Hope someday to have something to say at such meetings. I feel there is a major communication problem at (this institution). Top administrators seem most interested in protecting their jobs." (Journal, 7/11/86)

The word "bitching" is used to describe complaints that do not lead to action. It strikes me as very powerful that a female word is used to describe this situation. The implication is that men's complaints are heard and acted upon whereas women's are often not.

In the second example above, it is not that Pat has nothing to say for his comments indicate that he definitely does but rather that he feels it would be futile to say anything.

Part of the feeling of powerlessness is attributed to feeling neither understood nor agreed with by management. The values at work for the teachers and for the administration appear to be at odds as we see below:

> Pat: "I realize that it is very hard to sell looking after (students') personal needs to administrators. I don't (bother to try). I just do it. I find that many administrators don't understand this or their bosses don't."

> So I just go ahead with what I think is *right and just.*"
> (Journal, 14/11/86)
>
> Ann: "My discussion with John today confirms clearly that management doesn't agree with my ideas of *'the right and the good'* in many areas." (Journal, 8/1/87)

In the two preceding entries, there is a clear split between what these teachers see as "right" and what, in their eyes, the administration sees as "right". In whose interests are program decisions made? Whose "right" prevails? From the point of view of these teachers, it would appear to be the "right" as seen by the administrators rather than by the teachers or the learners.

Ann goes beyond the expressions of anger and powerlessness she feels and sees some connections to be made between the teachers' sense of powerlessness and their stated goals of trying to enable a growing sense of power within the learners over their own lives in this their new country.

> "Last year, I said that I thought we needed to do problem-posing with the teachers before we were ready to do it with the students for we have to be living out of a critical orientation in order to engage the students (in doing so)."
> (Journal, 8/1/87)

In that teaching presumes a certain amount of expertise in that which is being taught, it seems logical to support Ann's idea that before the teachers can actively engage the learners in learning to take more control over the direction of their own lives in Canada, they do need first to confront their own lack of power in the context of their work experience.

In that commitment is stated as a program intent, one last comment of Ann's seems very significant as she notes a shift in her understanding of work time and personal time as she grows increasingly alienated from the administration:

> "I had spent many hours of my own time putting those picture files together. The funny thing is, I didn't think of it as my own time until recently." (Journal, 19/1/87)

F. The Power of the Printed Word

The S.N. manual was a very controversial document in W.C.C.C.. In the beginning, it was ignored by the institution but the teachers using it saw its value as a radical sourcebook for critical educators in the field and began to show it to colleagues in other centers. Soon the institution was bombarded with orders for copies and, at that, they became suspicious.

> Ann: "John just phoned to say he'd written to (a well-known critical educator in Boston) and (an E.S.L. administrator in Calgary) saying we can't send them 15 and 10 S.N. manuals respectively. Then he got a memo from Matthew saying we can't send or give anything to anybody as a cost-cutting measure. John thinks there's more to it." (Journal, 14/11/86)

At about this time, the pressure mounted for the teachers in the program to rewrite the manual so that it would be a step-by-step directive on how and what to teach these learners. The teachers argued in vain that such a book would miss the whole point of the curriculum process which was to involve the learners in determining what and how they wanted to learn. Elaine writes of her fears of such a curriculum:

> "Language training sounds like being able to produce certain words or sentences from a language as well as grammar, reading, writing without emphasis on it being relevant to their lives. I think that is the danger of a manual that tells you day by day, unit by unit, what to do. If you get all your materials from a book and not from your students you lose sight of E.S.L. as education for participation in Canadian society." (Journal, 4/12/86)

In the first of the two entries preceding, the administrators seemed to feel a loss of control over the printed word they did not understand and longed to have it rewritten in a form they could understand and thus control. In the second passage, the teacher recognizes that a curriculum drawn around process rather than content gives a lot of power to the teacher and the learner to participate out of the concrete situation and she does not want to see that power lost.

G. Power in the Ideas Themselves

The idea of student participation in curricular decision-making is a very radical and threatening idea, as we have seen. The entire concept shifts power away from the educational hierarchy and into the hands of the learners, as they are able and willing to take it. The following two passages acknowledge the power of these ideas. The first speaks of the danger of working in a manner that so little is known about. The second speaks of the impossibility of killing a just idea once it is truly understood and accepted by teachers.

> Ann: "I still feel very limited about not having a common language with the students and I am extremely ambivalent about opening cans of worms for other people or engaging them in something where they are the ones who have to take the risks." (Journal, 8/1/87)

> Ann: "Our exchange about bringing someone *in line vs. on line* has new significance now that I see recent efforts to bring me and others *in line* at (this institution). In talking with Lynn last Tuesday, I recalled how Iris Waters (an administrator from a non-E.S.L. program) was parachuted into the S.N. program to bring us all in line. S.N. really started disintegrating after that. But now, I feel that we're all *on line* again. My being here since Sept. and your (our) project have made a difference. In spite of all the shit around us, we're the strongest we've ever been. I think it will last a while after my departure IF the group isn't split up too soon but with several leaving, the future of S.N. is doubtful. On the other hand, diffusion doesn't necessarily mean death. We may all take it with us and spread it wherever we go. (Notice how I talk about S.N. here! Even though I say 'it', I see S.N. as some kind of living organism, maybe an entity.) (Journal, 19/1/87)

IN SUMMARY

It is evident from the energy behind these numerous passages that power is far from irrelevant to any examination of meaning in the S.N. program. In the journal entries, we have seen the ambiguity, the confusion and the struggle that are brought to what is, essentially, an attempt to radically alter the status quo as it has existed in the teaching of E.S.L. and, perhaps, in the long run, as it has existed in the power relationships between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations within our society. The contradictions we see between stated intents and lived experience suggest that there is much which is not understood about the nature of the real curriculum of E.S.L. for those who are called students as well as for those who teach them.

Chapter 5

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

Introduction

In Chapter 4, we have seen, through numerous windows of the teachers' own words, glimpses into the lived experience of those who teach in the Special Needs Program at W.C.C.C. We moved rapidly from experience to experience, idea to idea, with little opportunity to reflect on what it all means when seen as a whole. In Chapter 5, I would invite the reader to reflect with me as I draw together the major themes I see arising throughout the research project and from that gathering, to ask "So what?" At the beginning of Chapter 4, I had invited you to think of yourself as a passenger on a moving train, enjoying the scenery as it flitted by. If I may extend that metaphor, we may now imagine ourselves as having disembarked. We have been met by those who are asking us, "How was your journey? What did you see?" We are called upon to recollect and select those scenes in our memory which stand out as significant and to name those in a way which invites our listeners to want to journey there and, perhaps, to stay awhile.

The reflections which follow are gathered together under five general headings. In the first, I have summarized the lived understandings of the primary concepts involved in teaching adult E.S.L. in this context, as I see them. I have located those understandings in relation to those found the chart in Chapter 2 and I have discussed briefly the major dimensions of the relationship I found in this study among the three primary concepts of language, teaching, and power.

In the second, I acknowledge what I see as an attempt by those of us who designed the curriculum of this program to shift our practice into a different paradigm. There are signs of some measure of success in that undertaking.

That success, however, is limited by the inevitable obstacles to paradigm shift. In the third section, I have named those obstacles as I see them and hope that such a naming will serve the interests of those who are willing to address each obstacle in turn in order to move further [illegible] the direction of the planned changes in their practice, changes designed to more effectively enable adult immigrant learners to find meaning and fulfilment in this their new society.

The obstacles to change are many. Beyond the curricular concept of language as meaning-making which is described as the fourth column of the chart previously presented, what else serves to enable critical educators to move towards their intents? One item of largely unexploited knowledge is what Polanyi (1962) has called personal knowledge. In the fourth section, I have named the ways in which the research project itself served to bring the experiences of the teachers to a level of knowledge which can be applied to the betterment of their (and my) educational practice.

The last section is a personal one in which I reflect on my experience of doing not only the dissertation per se but of doing the studies which were a prerequisite to that work, insofar as those studies influenced the actual research as I experienced it in its totality.

I. Lived Understandings of the Primary Concepts Underlying Teaching in the Special Needs Program

Three concepts lie at the foundations of the S.N. curriculum: language, teaching, and power. In the words of the teachers as presented in the last chapter, we have seen some of the ways in which the teachers lived out of their actual understandings of those concepts, consciously or unconsciously. We might now ask ourselves how closely these lived understandings appear to match or not match the stated understandings which went with the program intents as originally designed and to look at the dynamics of those matches or gaps which we find.

At the beginning of this dissertation, four views of E.S.L. curriculum were articulated based on the understanding of language which lay at the heart of each. Whereas each single expression of experience in this program can be located in one of these four columns, it is plain to see that no one teacher stands solidly in any one of the approaches but moves in and out of all of them. The tension lies in wanting to teach out of the participatory or meaning-making approach and yet finding oneself more often than not everywhere else.

I see a long continuum of possibilities in determining the situation of an individual teacher in relation to the critical fourth column. I offer the following as possible points along that continuum:

1. The teacher who does not see any value in participatory education and has no desire to move in that direction, seeing communicative competence, or one of the other approaches, as the most desirable approach to T.E.S.L.

2. the teacher who sees no value in it and does not understand it but who nonetheless accepts that this program is designed for participatory education and therefore wants to appear to be doing it and so tries to use the right words.

3. the teacher who likes the idea of participatory education but really lacks understanding as to its radical nature and therefore is most often frustrated when he/she tries to use the tools of participation.

4. the teacher who finds justice and meaning in the idea of participatory education and has grasped that the way to deepening his/her understanding of it is to become a genuine participant him/herself, entering with openness the role of learner and co-participant.

5. the teacher who experiences clearly the nature of the oppressed and the oppressor and is able to act at one with the participants, facilitating their journey but not controlling it.

I think what the study has done is validate the four-column approach as a useful way of locating curricular practice (lived and planned) in E.S.L. but, in addition, has exposed the two-dimensional nature of that tool and the need to see other dimensions, one of which is the relationship between the teacher's own human experience in relation to power and his/her ability to relate meaningfully to the learner's human experience in relation to power. The greatest difficulty I saw in implementing this curriculum was the common perception that the participatory approach was a new set of techiques for doing what we have been trying to do all along whereas in fact, this approach is a totally different understanding of the meanings of the E.S.L. classroom. The teacher cannot learn to DO participatory curriculum. The teacher can, if he/she desires to dive into the depths of his/her own woundedness and oppression, learn to BE a participant.

Looking first to language, the curricular intents, as described in "The Manual" fall clearly into the "meaning-making" school of E.S.L. in which language is seen as the medium of human experience, thus, the important place of story in the processes suggested for use in such classrooms. Language, as the teachers talk about it in practice, ranges from being a set of structures and parts called vocabulary, to being a tool for use in getting along in one's environment. Their understanding of the latter was accompanied by a strong sense of the importance of self-esteem in the learning of a language. In other words, the teachers have, for the most part, conceptually arrived at the third column but not yet reached the paradigmatically different fourth column, although that is what is called for by the curriculum documents and that is what the teachers favor, even though they are quite aware that they do not, for the most part, understand it as fully as they would like. They are still claimed by the long tradition of both their own learning experiences and of their practice in the profession. This is not to say they do not experience language as it is conceptualized in a meaning-making or participatory curriculum but they do not yet see themselves as having any control over it. *Real* language, as they have named it, comes upon them as serendipity and they delightfully respond to it when it appears but their understandings of the dynamics of that happening are as yet limited.

That this is so is not unrelated to the difficulty they appear to have with the notion of power and with their personal and collective experience of it. Three of the four teachers were uncomfortable with even the word "power", preferring to use the word "control" which was more familiar to their experience. Their use of words and expressions like "threaten", "force", "take back control", "make them (do something)", "allow", "terminate", and "lay down the law" speak to their comfort with the notion of "power over" as opposed to the notions of "power within" and "power with" which are consistent with the intents of the fourth column. They were willing to share the control of the classroom with the students but only because they knew they could take it back when things got "out of control". This type of sharing is very consistent with the currently mainstream communicative competence school of E.S.L.

In recent educational practice generally, we have often heard the term "learner-centred" curriculum. I find this term somewhat dangerous because the meaning is construed in so many different ways. The teachers in this program were definitely concerned with meeting the needs of the learners. In the journals, they often raised their concern with the difficulties they encountered in so doing. However, there was usually the assumption that the teachers *could* and *should* determine what these needs were. The problem, as they saw it, was less in understanding the needs than in meeting them given the time frame and other limitations within which they worked. Ann's question to the group, "Why are we teaching (the names of) vegetables?", was, to my ears, as refreshing as a stream of cool clear water in a dusty desert. The panicky response from the other teachers, "They're in the curriculum, aren't they?", indicated the security they felt with what they had always done (i.e. taught the names of vegetables).

How can we account for the discrepancy between an obvious desire on the part of the teachers to enable the intents and processes of an emergent participatory curriculum and the fact that this desire was realized as an exception rather than the norm? I do not pretend to have "the" answer to this question but my sense is that the direction of the answer lies somewhere in relation to our own lack of consciousness regarding the essence of power and the conditions for it to be present in strength, the state of our own power in being accountable for our lives, and an underdeveloped sense of what it means for us to participate in the world. In my experience of working with people from all over the world, the majority of Canadians are far less politically conscious than the peoples of most countries. In general, if we can live with reasonable comfort and safety, we "trust" that those in authority are doing their jobs. We may complain but seldom does that go beyond giving voice to our frustrations and then dropping it. Relatively few Canadians are involved in political parties. Many immigrants with far less formal education than is the norm in Canada nonetheless find us abysmally ignorant of what is going on in the world and non-critical as to why. In that participatory curriculum is based on the intent of empowerment of the immigrant learner, it becomes somewhat incongruous for us as teachers to expect ourselves to be able to reach towards that intent unless we are willing to confront our own issues regarding powerlessness and injustice in our own lives. That the teachers were unable or unwilling to voice their thoughts and feelings to the administration in defence of the program at the beginning of the research but were able and willing to do so less than one month later speaks to their willingness to look at their own issues when given the support and circumstance to do so.

Whereas a meaning-making curriculum requires a shift in the locus of power from the teacher to the participant group as a whole, there is an interesting consequence in the shift of the locus of insecurity from the learners to the teachers. A language learner, especially a beginner, inevitably feels a measure of vulnerability and helplessness. The language teacher, on the other hand, has always felt very secure being in the position of "one who knows" working with "those who do not know". When the power is shifted to include all the participants, the teacher has to surrender that absolute control and ability to predict, to a large degree, what is going to happen in the classroom. For some teachers, that is exciting as well as challenging. For others, it is very frightening. To allow such genuine participation on the part of the learners is to risk failure, disaster or nothing happening at all. Thus, I believe, we saw the willingness on the part of these teachers to surrender that control when they saw that they could take it back easily, which is a conditional sharing of power. To share power conditionally is, in a sense, to give only an illusion of power. (Can we say a person is acting out of their own power when another has only allowed them to do so on condition that the other can take it back at any time?) Perhaps this is inevitable when one works within the bounds of a large institution given its own parameters of power and freedom.

Personally, I have always wondered to what degree one could teach for empowerment from within a large government institution created in the interests of the powerful in the society when such empowerment, if understood, would be interpreted by those in power as being against their interests. I came to the conclusion, as did, I believe, most of the staff in this project that it could happen only to a certain extent and even then, sometimes "underground". That the teachers saw the need to conceal some of what they said and did from their supervisors shows that they saw what would be deemed as unacceptable in those eyes even when the teachers saw those events as being both human and necessary. They took some measure of risk in so concealing.

We have noted the insecurity the teachers sometimes evidenced in being asked to explain what they did and why. How can we account for this? They believed they were acting in the interests of the students so why would they feel insecure? I expect that this was because of the limited background understanding they had as to the nature of the S.N. curriculum and, once again, because their personal critical understandings were largely undeveloped. They were uncomfortable with the recognition that they wanted real languaging opportunities to be present for the learners but that they did not know how to engineer those, uncomfortable because their lived notion of teacher was of one who was in control. Critical understandings do not necessarily come from reading a book, in my experience; they come from actively questioning our own assumptions, beliefs and experiences as we become conscious of them, often because someone else raises them as questions. Critical understandings come in dialogue with those who have different consciousness from ourselves, with those who can see what we have been prevented from seeing by the bounds of our ideologies and the systems which ensure their hegemony. For the most part, the teachers had not had these ventures into critical awareness and that made it difficult for them to fully own the critical nature of the curriculum.

The irony in that statement is that there are, within the journal entries, examples which indicate the opportunities for the development of such critical awareness. They arose in the anecdotes the learners told their teachers, stories about their lives, their histories, their problems and their successes. That these were told in a way which made them seem like "bonuses" rather than a significant part of the curriculum itself is unfortunate. Had they been seen as the center of the curriculum rather than something interesting that happened at lunchtime or coffeetime, the teachers and learners together could have explored the meanings of such stories and made the connections between the stories of the learners and their own stories, connections which would have been very valuable in enabling the learners to understand the world of meanings into which they had come and which would have enabled the teachers to grow even more in their critical understandings of both the learners and the society in which we live. In addition, had the value of such dialogue among the teachers been seen and sufficient time allotted for it to occur, the teachers themselves could have worked with their own understandings and their application to curriculum. As it was, they enjoyed and benefitted from the time we spent in such dialogue during the research project but were nonetheless relieved when the ten weeks had passed because they were exhausted from the extra workload. It would seem that, because the locus of responsibility is still seen largely as the teacher's, there was little energy left for the teacher to learn to become a participant.

In summary, we see the teachers wanting to be catalysts of the learners' full participation in the processes of their language learning but they were often more like warehouse clerks, supplying goods that someone else had produced to those seen as in need of them. The difficulty they had in finding their own voice within the institution did not help them in their efforts to enable the learners to find their voices in this society. That they nonetheless wish to do so indicates that we see what is, possibly, a curricular shift *in process.*

II. Signs of Paradigm Shift

> "Revolutions in science, Thomas Kuhn argues, occur when the shared set of intellectual assumptions that form the tradition of a discipline (a paradigm) breaks down and gives way to another, causing controversy and insecurity in the process." (Raimes, 1983, p. 535)

Raimes' (1983) article in the T.E.S.O.L. Quarterly explores the reasons she believes that the E.S.L. field is in a process of paradigm shift. If controversy and insecurity are indeed signs of that shift, this program certainly supports that hypothesis. There is no doubt that the program as designed does challenge many of the assumptions of the old paradigm. It challenges the underlying understanding of language and the purpose of education in this context. It says that power and culture, which were non-questions in the past, are relevant notions to understand in this curriculum. It questions the role of the teacher and the role of the learner. That is the theory. I believe, however, that there are significant signs in the actual practice that such a shift is occurring.

The Special Needs Program is based on an understanding of language as the medium of human experience and of curriculum as a meaning-making venture. The traditional center of the E.S.L. curriculum, namely the learner's deficit in English language skills, is replaced by the lives of the participants (lives grounded in cultural understandings and histories) and in power structures in the context of Canadian society. Language becomes not the end of instruction but the medium of learning and of life in the making. Is this what actually happens in the S.N. classrooms? Much of the time, it is not. Much of the time, the teacher is still delivering the goods, seeing the learners for what they do not know rather than for what they do know. However, there are sparkling exceptions to that conclusion and it is in such anomalies that Kuhn (1970) notes the presence of paradigm shift.

It is not in the everyday presentation of the lessons that the teachers find their joy and excitement. It is in the happenings they have called freewheeling that they find their sense of accomplishment. When the teachers are freewheeling, they are said to be "going with the moment" and letting the learners "run with it". When the learners were said to be freewheeling, they were excitedly speaking English in the telling of their own stories, the asking of questions, and the sharing of meaningful dialogue with one another and with the teacher. In the birth of this notion of freewheeling, I found a particular satisfaction because these teachers had taken a curriculum design and extended it to name a process and an experience that worked for them. In doing so, they showed the dynamic nature of this curriculum; it was alive and still very much in the process of being explored and named. Because freewheeling named the active participation of the learners in deciding the what and how of their learning, it is a concept very consistent with the theoretical design of the program and is indicative of the reality of the paradigm shift taking place in this program.

It is also exciting because, when the learners seize the moment and run with it, in English, they have expropriated the language in a real moment. They have left the artificial world of regulated classroom language and seized the moment, in their new language. They are communicating across linguistic and cultural barriers in a spontaneous manner, as one would expect to do in one's own language. For me, that is breaking a barrier. It is saying, "I can BE in this language!"

The other notion developed in the course of the research was that of "starting points". With this notion, it was understood that words were not taught only for their intrinsic meanings but also for the interactions their use enabled to happen among the participants. Teaching the names of vegetables was no longer based on the assumption that the learners would need these words to buy their groceries, which indeed they did not if, as speakers of Chinese, they bought them from the Chinese market. Rather, teaching the names of vegetables was seen for its value in allowing the group to prepare vegetable soup and share in enjoying it, an activity which allowed the experience of community to develop around food, one of the ways in which people have traditionally gathered and shared together in all cultures. The values understood in this notion are radically different from the values in the first three columns of our chart, values which look for achievement in correctness and in communicability. The value in the notion of starting points is one of community, found and developed in the medium of language. The assumptions and values common to the first three columns have been challenged by the notions of freewheeling and starting points.

Two other signs of paradigm shift mentioned by both Kuhn (1970) and Raimes (1983) are confusion and insecurity. We have seen the reaction the teachers had to explaining what they were doing and why. They looked and sounded anxious. Part of their dilemma was in finding words to describe what they were just beginning to understand. When we try to use familiar words to describe new ideas, the meaning is sometimes lost. When we try to use unfamiliar words, the listener has a tendency to then try to "translate" such terms into words with which he or she is familiar. John (the department head), for example, was very uncomfortable with the use of the term community as an intent for this program. He did not understand what we meant so he referred to it as "bonding"[5], a term which held meaning for him. We felt frustrated with this because, for us, the two words hold very different worlds of meaning. For us, community is a spiritual notion and conveys the sense of oneness or union with a group of persons. In the notion of community we have a sense of finding our identity, of being our fullest and best as individuals within the security of the community. We can easily associate the notion of community with that of power. "Bonding" on the other hand, is a term which we did not like. For me, it calls forth images of a baby monkey who, having been separated from its mother, is now bonding with the human or machine providing its sustaining milk. It is an image of dependence which is a far cry from the empowerment this curriculum seeks to develop. There is a danger in trying to translate new notions into old terms, and, although the word community is not itself new, the notion of community as being relevant to language teaching is.

There was another word which was all too familiar to the teachers but which had, in the field of practice, acquired a meaning quite different from its original meaning, namely, the word "dialogue". This word has traditionally meant an exploration of meaning between persons. It has depth, significance and relevance embedded within the notion. In E.S.L., however, it has come to mean a short, functional, memorized verbal interchange between persons. Whereas this notion of dialogue may indeed be functional in terms of teaching oft-used speech patterns, there is no genuine meaning present in a such a contrived interchange. In such "dialogues", the participants are distanced from the reality of authentically and directly *being* in language. In a participatory curriculum, there is a need, I believe, to reclaim the original sense of dialogue which recognizes the mutuality of participants.

Another indicator, for me, of confusion in this program was the inability of the teachers to respond with anything but blank looks to some of the questions I asked, questions which I saw as being essential to understanding what this particular curriculum was about. I asked about the role of the immigrant in Canadian society. I asked about the vision to which they taught. Both questions were mystifying to the teachers, even after various explanations and examples on my part. For a teacher to consciously be a catalyst, there must be some sort of vision to which that catalytic action applies but, in this project, I saw less of a vision than of a sense that the old ways were not working and, therefore, there must be a better way. The teachers were between worlds of meaning, one of which was familar and one of which had yet to take shape except for what was written in "The Manual".

I see the question "What is the role of the immigrant in Canadian society?" as being just as important as asking what language, teaching and power are in this context. Education as a social institution is always said to be in the interests of the broader society. (Said, that is, by those who uphold the status quo and in whose interest it operates.) Therefore, to teach adult immigrant learners, we need to have a sense of where our teaching is leading, of whose interests it serves. I believe that most E.S.L. programs teach the immigrant learners to be passive recipients of what those in power want for them and from them. How? By asking all the questions and expecting the learners to give the answers. Less than one year ago, a woman in a program in which I am currently teaching made the observation that the community college from which she had recently graduated from an E.S.L. program had taught the students to listen whereas our program had taught the students to speak. Her reflective comment was music to my ears because, for me, E.S.L. is about enabling people to find their Voice in this society. There is no meaningful speaking without listening but it is quite conceivable that one can listen but not speak, if one lacks the sense of permission and the confidence to do so.

Both the confusion over the language to express what was happening and the finding of terms such as "freewheeling" and "starting points" to describe certain special highlights of that experience are indicative of paradigm shift. The teachers were very much on the way but still had many obstacles to overcome before they could have the sense of having arrived where they wanted to be.

III. Obstacles to Paradigm Shift

A change in technique or strategy is relatively straightforward because one is operating from the same foundational set of values, assumptions and beliefs. A change in technique is seen to enable us to do better that which we are already trying to do. A paradigm shift, however, is totally different because the underlying values and assumptions are very different. Even when we see the value of radical change and are striving to move towards it, we generally experience a lot of inner confusion and struggle. Seeing the need for radical change does not mean we understand either what is or what we would like to be. Systems are deeply rooted and superficial change does not uproot them. In regard to the attempted curricular shift in this program, which, if successful, would move E.S.L. into a different paradigm based on participation rather than control, I see three types of obstacles. The first falls into the category of responding to the unknown. The second refers to the conflicting interests in such a change. (A transfer of power is seldom greeted without resistance.) The third is a particular system which pervades every aspect of our lives: patriarchy.

A. Responding to the Unknown

Whereas "The Manual" for the Special Needs Program outlines the intents and activities consistent with a vision of participatory, meaning-making curriculum, only one of the teachers in this research project had expressed any clarity in regard to that vision and she most certainly raised more questions than any of the others. The other teachers were frank in their desire to learn more about the unusual ideas behind the curriculum and about how to implement it. They welcomed the research project as an opportunity to do that. They had had enough of a taste of these notions to know they wanted more but were unsure how to go about acquiring that knowledge. For example, when real language came up in the classroom, they were totally excited by it and quite willing to "let go of the reins of power", as Gerta put it, so that those opportunities could fly as long as possible. When the students began to freewheel, the teachers were happy, feeling like they were on track and that the students were learning what they were intended to learn, not only language but also participation. However, when asked how those conditions came about, no one could say. It was a struggle, in fact, even to define what we meant when we talked about real language and freewheeling. Gradually, we were able to bound those notions with definitions and thus to see them with some clarity. In time, I suspect we would have been able to name with equal clarity the conditions which preceded those experiences and, thereby, to facilitate these desired experiences with greater frequency.

The insecurity the teachers felt with the unknown came out in several ways. When one of us would ask a question, we often heard either "Well, it's like this..., isn't it?" or "Well, I know but I can't explain it." Or, someone would discuss an idea and end it by saying, "..., you know," when, in fact, we did not. In addition, there were two staff meetings during the research period at which time the teachers were asked to explain the S.N. Program to administrators. At the first meeting, Pat in particular regretted not being able to put his knowings into words but all the teachers except Ann had the same frustration. (Ann had chosen to remain silent knowing that the administrators were already antagonistic towards her and hoping that if she did not speak, the teachers would say what needed to be said.) Less than one month later, there was a second meeting and this time, the teachers were proud to have found their voices. They attributed that to the intensive questioning we had been doing in the research project.

The unknown is not only frightening at times; it is difficult. In this situation, the teachers believe in the curriculum design, in the goal of participation, but we were unsure as to how to bring that about. It is somewhat like having a river cross our path. We want to get across but we do not know the river. We know neither its depth nor its speed nor the possibility of islands of quicksand beneath the surface. So, we set off and some find the crossing easier than others. Some take the time to acquaint themselves with all the available information about the river before they attempt to cross. Some act in faith and take the risk that it could be dangerous. As teachers we are familiar with control; we are less familiar with participation. It has not been our experience as learners nor as teachers. It is hard to find new ways of being in the classroom.

B. Conflicting Interests

The Learners

The interests of the various groups with an interest in E.S.L. programming are not such that they act as a united force all pulling in one direction. First, we see the immigrant learners whose most basic interest is that of survival. They need to work in order to provide for the needs of their families and, in order to work here, they need to understand, speak and in some cases, read and write the language. Many had family members living in poverty and ill health in refugee camps or in the countries they had left. To enable those family members to join them, they needed to save money for sponsorship purposes. To keep them alive, they had to send home some of the scant money they received on their meagre training allowances. They struggled to retain their dignity in a land where often little dignity is accorded those who do not speak the language or understand the cultural norms of the society. Those with skills and qualifications struggled with the fear that they were doomed to be toilet cleaners and night sweepers for the rest of their lives.

It was in the learners' interest to understand this society and find their place in it. They needed to learn to ask questions, to speak their truth, to discover their rights and fight for them, to express their needs, their feelings, hopes and dreams. They needed to know how to resist racist attacks and condescending putdowns. They needed to learn how to tell their stories so that neighbors and co-workers could understand them. They needed to know how to participate in Canadian society, how to protest, how to vote, how to organize with others who shared their interest. They needed time to learn these things, especially if they came as illiterate in their first language with little formal education by way of which they could begin to understand the most basic things about a technological, capitalistic society.

The Government

The Government, however, had different interests in purchasing seats in these courses. Many immigrants have never received any full-time language training. If their employment counsellor is able to put them directly into a job, they often do so without the person even knowing that there is a government policy which states that they have a right to language training if they require it in order to find and do "suitable employment", whatever that means.

The Government needs low-paying labor to turn the wheels of the Canadian economy. They also need the votes of the conscientious portion of Canadian society who believe that immigrants deserve a chance to learn the English they need for settlement and citizenship purposes. A compromise is reached. For those who survived not being placed directly into a job when they first arrived, they were given five months (twenty weeks) of training, enough for a well-educated European professional who learns well. (Having worked, at that time, disqualified you from federally-sponsored language courses since the conclusion was reached that you had made a successful transition to the labor market without such a course, even if you were an engineer who took a three-week job as a dishwasher, thinking that you would not have to depend on handouts while waiting for your course to start.) Twenty weeks is not, however, enough time for the Cambodian refugee who has been on the run most of his or her life, often having no more than a couple of years of formal schooling. The Government does not act in the interests of many of the immigrant persons who come here, persons who need very different kinds of courses than what are currently available and who need time not only to learn the language but to become literate in a society where that is taken for granted. In the past, the Government has acted, often, in the interests of the corporate sector which has needed cheap labor for production purposes. Now, it is questionable whether even that interest is being served in that the need for an educated and technically skilled labor force is greater than ever.

The Administration

The administration, in this instance, appears to operate in the interests of its own convenience. Efficiency, it was implied, dictated that any teacher should be able to teach in this unusual program by picking up and reading "The Manual". The administrators did not understand the importance of relationships in this style of teaching, a style in which not every teacher can teach. They did not understand the need for spontaneity, flexibility, imagination and critical awareness required in this style of teaching.

There were other examples of the rule of efficiency, actual or assumed. Elaine made no protest when a maintenance man told her she could not have a mural on the wall for fear the tape might ruin the new paint job. Had she had confidence that the administrators would have seen value in her idea, she might have taken the matter to them, but it did not seem worth asking. The administrators resisted giving the S.N. classes a room of their own, wanting them instead to go into one-hour classes and move from room to room like the students in the other programs, neither understanding nor caring that these students are not like the other students and cannot just fit themselves into structures and systems which have no meaning for them and then expect to learn. These learners needed some common ground on which to place their feet.

The Teachers

Due to the lack of job security in the E.S.L. department, most teachers were not willing to voice their concerns or objections to decisions they felt to be bad because they feared, quite appropriately, that they would find themselves out of jobs. Those who did were regarded as nuisances and the visionaries as trouble-makers.

The teachers dwelt in a land of between, remarkably similar in some ways to the situation of the learners. The learners were between cultures. The teachers found themselves trying to mediate between the vastly different worlds of the learners and everyone else in society. We saw Elaine wishing she could educate the man in the Senior Citizens' Centre who loudly rejected the woman's answer to his patronizing question, "Where does milk come from?"

We see the teachers trying to interpret Canada to the learners and the learners to Canada. Given their circumstances, they do amazingly well. They lack a background in critical education and so they readily admit they do not understand the curriculum with which they are working as fully as they would like. They have not dealt with their own issues around participation (power) in the workplace and so find themselves in a disadvantaged position when it comes to teaching in an empowering manner. They come from mostly native-born, middle-class, white backgrounds and are thus ill-prepared, in some regards, to respond meaningfuly to learners who have survived war, famine, ill-health, poverty, and the death of numerous family members who ought not, in the natural order of things as we know it, to have died. Nor can most of us begin to understand what racism can do to its victims.

I recently visited a bilingual Settlement Language Program for a group of all-Cambodian men and women. They asked me about my children. Having already heard of their losses, I decided to tell them not only of my three daughters but also of the loss of my 17-year old son. I was amazed at the contrast between their response to my words and the response I normally get in a group of Canadian-born persons. In the latter, there is a mix of sympathy and curiosity as to how he died. The Cambodians, however, long accustomed to such news, just nodded and continued the conversation. I was deeply moved by that experience. Nothing has devastated me more than my son's death yet here are a people seemingly beyond devastation, where the unacceptable has become, in some dreadful manner, acceptable. How can we teachers reach out to such people educationally if not in a genuine dialogue where we learn as much from them as they from us?

C. Patriarchy

One of the largest obstacles I see to paradigm shift in this context is the overriding influence of a patriarchal system in our society. Patriarchy is marked by a hierarchical, top-down system of authority in which people have power over others. This is so accepted as natural that it is primarily only in women's organizations that we see there being an alternative. Patriarchy values logic over intuition and systematic organization over wholistic response. In the Special Needs Program, we see male administrators at three levels setting their will, on several occasions, in opposition to the teachers who were female but for Pat. We see policies set by governments wherein males are still in the majority and in which the systems are highly bureaucratic. The curriculum, on the other hand, was designed by two women who argued that the learner should be viewed as a whole person rather than a person just deficient in English, who argued for the integrity of the individual in the face of an administration which wanted all students to fit into predesigned slots and all teachers to be equally capable of "delivering the goods." The curriculum was intended to be participatory and emergent in an institution which understood the very idea of curriculum to be pre-set and teacher-directed. No wonder Ann was able to say that John just did not speak our language.

In the face of the enormous obstacles confronting the success of the S.N. program, I would have little confidence in its success were it not for the determination and compassion of the teachers in it and also for the fact that the shift being attempted by the S.N. teachers is symptomatic of a much larger shift taking place in our society generally. Ferguson (1980), in describing an emergent paradigm of power and politics, speaks also of paradigm shift and notes many of the same problems that have been noted in this project. I list but a selected few for purposes of comparison:

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
-emphasis on programs, issues,...goals	-resistance to rigid programs, schedules
-change is imposed by authority	-change grows out of consensus and/or is inspired by leadership
-power *for* others (care-taking)	-power *with* others
-solely "masculine", rational orientation, linear model	-both rational and intuitive principles, appreciation of nonlinear interaction, dynamic systems model
-aggressive leaders, passive followers	-leaders and followers engaged in dynamic relationship

affecting each other	
-either pragmatic or visionary	-both pragmatic and visionary
-emphasis on freedom *from* certain types of interference	-emphasis on freedom *for* positive, creative action, self-expression, self-knowledge
-emphasis on external, imposed reform	-emphasis on transformation in individuals as essential to successful reform
-choice between best interest of individual or community interest reciprocal	-refusal to make that choice. Self-interest and community
-compartmentalizes aspects of human experience	-attempts to be interdisciplinary, holistic. Searches for interrelationships between branches of government, liaison, cross-fertilization

(Ferguson, 1980, p. 210-212)

In Ferguson's comparison, we see a description which parallels closely the contrast between the administrative view of what is expected to happen in the S.N. Program and the view set out in the curriculum thereof. Why, we ask ourselves, did the administrators allow this program to be implemented if they were not in accord with the values and practices upon which it was designed? We can only conclude that, whereas they knew the old ways were not working for that group of learners and they were willing to try something different, they did not really understand the nature of what had been proposed in the Special Needs Program, nor perhaps the reasons why the traditional ways had been ineffective for such learners.

IV. Valuing Personal Knowledge and Participatory Research

Polanyi's (1962) concept of personal knowledge has been of great value to me in doing this project. I felt a surge of happiness in reading both his words and also those of Pinar and Grumet (1976) on the value of autobiography in education. I have experienced the joy of bringing my own experiences to a level of understanding such that I can begin to see and make use of them in a way I could not before I had given voice to those experiences and reflected upon them.

Most of us, I believe, have grown up believing that knowledge is the domain of books and those who write them, and of institutions in which we are given access to those bodies of knowledge deemed by those in authority over us to have value for us. We own that body of knowledge which society has recognized us to have with certificates, diplomas, and degrees which allow us to do certain jobs dependent upon the exercise of that knowledge. However, there has been little to encourage us to see in our own experiences the source of the knowledge of greatest value. We have learned to trivialize our own experiences in favor of what the experts tell us is so.

In T.E.S.L., the experts give their views in the journals and textbooks which most of the teachers either do not have time to read or do not understand what the authors are talking about when they do. Thus it was that, at the beginning of the research project, the teachers felt very intimidated by questions that asked them why they were doing what they were doing. They felt called upon to justify their actions by reference to the experts, be they theorists or the curriculum manual itself. One example was their initial assumption that they should teach the names of vegetables because they were on the curriculum; they were not. In the research project, the teachers found themselves asking and being asked all kinds of relevant questions to which their experiences provided answers but to which they had not given much thought before. So it was that Pat came out of the initial story workshop saying: "I thought I didn't have much to say. I guess I did though." (Journal, 11/12/86)

Gerta, for example, who was not much given to anecdotal writing was nonetheless able to reach into her own personal experiences to find ways of better understanding her students. When she recalls her feelings in Germany about wanting to be "Gerta" rather than an Edmontonian or Canadian, she is naming an experience which speaks to the need to be acknowledged as an individual rather than as just the member of a group who is, therefore, expected to respond to one's environment like every other member of that group. To reflect upon that experience in concert with others of like experience and ask what it means for a teacher to have had that experience would be to recognize the need to be conscious of responding to each individual as such rather than expecting that because other learners from that country responded in a particular manner, this one necessarily will too.

Personal knowledge, the knowledge born of reflective dialogue upon our experiences, enables us to bring our experiences to bear upon our teaching in a way which enables us to teach out of who we are and where we have been rather than teaching in the way we think we are supposed to teach or in which we ourselves have been taught.

When the teachers went to their second meeting with the administration, they had found their voices and they said what they had to say. They felt much more satisfied after that meeting than they had after the first one in which everyone felt uncomfortably silent. Ann wrote in her journal, and the teachers said in their end of the week conversation, that they attributed this newfound articulateness to their work in the project.

There is a significant parallel between the teachers' finding their voice through the stories, journal writing, and the discussions they had been having and their expressed desire for the learners to participate in society. Until the teachers had found their own voices, they were not able to feel they were participating meaningfully in the decision-making processes of the institution. I question the possibility of truly enabling the learners to find their voices when we have not ourselves found our own, unless of course, we are willing to learn together with the learners, which is one of the intents of any participatory curriculum.

In a sense, one could say that this whole study was built upon the assumption that each one of us as teachers knew a whole lot more than we knew we know and that it was worth the struggle to try to name that which we did know. Personal knowledge could be said to come when we name what we know but have not known we knew. When the teachers "discovered" freewheeling and starting points, they were not really inventing anything they did not already, in some sense, know, but because they had not yet named those phenomena which were meaningful in their teaching, they could not discuss them with confidence. They were, in the beginning, still saying, "I know but I can't explain it," a phrase we often hear with language learners who are trying to put their experiences into words and have enough passive vocabulary to know the words exist in their new language but who do not yet have enough active vocabulary to be able to name those thoughts to others.

Personal knowledge and participatory research are closely related. In participatory research, participants are coming to terms first with the meaning of their own experiences and secondly, with the collective meaning of the experiences of the group as a whole. Four years after I had done the daily ten week process with the teachers, I phoned each one of them and, after a brief chat to catch up on each other's lives, asked if, after the time that had passed, they still felt that the research project had made any meaningful difference in their lives. Each one said it had and when I asked how, all gave a similar answer. They said that they were more conscious of their teaching now, both of what they did and of the values which gave rise to it. I feel much better about this research knowing that they feel this way as I have never felt very positive about research which claimed to leave its "subjects" of study in the same form in which it found them.

Personal knowledge often finds its coming into being in the presence of collegial dialogue. It often takes the other to help us see what is not obvious to ourselves in our own experiences. I have long noticed a difference between those E.S.L. programs wherein the teachers have a common room with a desk for each and those programs wherein people come in, usually at night, teach their classes and go home. The presence of a work area encourages sharing of ideas, experiences, feelings and materials. You plunk your books down after a difficult class and say, "Wheeoo, I'm glad that's behind me. Were they ever... today!", which most often elicits some expression of sympathy and/or curiosity and the dialogue is begun. From the teachers' perspective in this research project, there were at least two different kinds of dialogue present which had not been present before: the dialogues with me in the journals and the group conversations we had every Friday afternoon. Ann was the most willing to engage in in-depth dialogue with me and usually answered my questions as well as asking a few of her own. Our collective writing is the longest of the four. Elaine was generous with her anecdotes and responded to most of my questions, although usually as briefly as possible without asking many questions of her own. Gerta and Pat occasionally answered my questions but often not in such a way that I knew how to pursue further conversation.

The group conversations, however, took two forms according to how exhausted and/or frustrated everyone was with the week which had passed. Either they were a collective blood-letting to release the tension which had built up through the week, or, they were an exciting communal pot into which each one threw his or her ideas and delighted to see the concoction thus brewed. It was in the group conversations that the notions of freewheeling and starting points took shape. This type of conversation seldom had the chance to happen in the regular day of the teachers. At staff meetings there were too many "agenda" items to allow free discussion of pedagogical issues. Around the desks, meaningful interchanges occurred between two or even three teachers but people's personal agendas tended to detract from meaningful exploration happening for the group as a whole, besides which the desks were not all in one cluster but were spread over a large area, with Ann in a separate room altogether.

Whereas the agendas for the group meetings were deliberately left fairly free to emerge as the moment asked, in keeping with the spirit of emergent curriculum which we encouraged with the learners, at the same time, there was usually a guiding question asked in the journals a few days ahead so that individuals could think about it in advance. There tended to be a good interplay between the work of the journals and the work of the group conversations because any of us felt free to raise questions which had come up in the journals to the group as a whole and sometimes referred to things we had said in the journals in order to raise the subjects for the consideration of the group. For example, it was Pat's frequent references to freewheeling in this journal which led me to inquire as to what it meant to everyone in the group.

V. Personal Reflections on the Experience of Being in a Doctoral Program

I think I realized a long time ago, with sadness and resignation, that if I were going to be able to influence the direction of E.S.L. in the ways in which I so ardently believe, I needed to have power in the eyes of those who had it already. I looked around me and saw administrators as having power so I did a master's degree in administration, naively thinking that might ease my route upward in the hierarchy. It did not. Women seldom got into the administration at W.C.C.C. A woman with radical ideas had no chance whatsoever.

After that, I became involved in writing journal articles and doing workshops for teachers. Here, I experienced the power of thoughts and rhetoric. Here, I realized that the real power lay not in the imposition of authority over others but in ideas. Ideas have a life of their own and, like seeds, once planted in fertile ground, those seeds grow and send out roots and flower and drop more seeds around them. Although I have left W.C.C.C., I have no doubt that the ideas I shared while I was there have found some fertile earth. The doctorate became not only a means whereby I could have valuable time to explore these ideas in a theoretical atmosphere and nourish them with the great disciplines of academic discourse, but, if successful, would also be a key for me to the channels of power which I saw as capable of making a significant difference.

That was now six years ago that I began. Since that time, I have spent a year teaching at a different university and, whereas I enjoyed it, I realized that my heart was still very much with the immigrant learners. As sentimental as it sounds, I felt and still feel that certain of them need me and need the radical opportunities I present in the classroom. Equally important, I need them because, as long as I am in the E.S.L. classroom, my ideas are constantly challenged by the reality of their lives and I have a sense of meaning to my own life that is more poignant than any I find elsewhere. I can come up with no theories that satisfy me as adequate. I am never bored. I am alive.

I see them struggling with the humiliation and frustration of not speaking the language and I struggle with them through my own humiliation of not speaking "patriarchese". I see people of color variously standing defiant in the face of prejudice or trying to be invisible and I wrestle with that choice as a woman wanting to be heard in a land of men, on my terms, not theirs. Spender writes about the silence of women in history and the violence of that silence in a world where language is power. I know that the language I must use to be heard is seldom my language but I do not understand with any clarity at all why this is so. Nonetheless, the following paragraph rang with truth when I read it:

> "When women do begin to work towards encoding their own meanings, they are merely doing what men have done for centuries: they are attempting to name the world from their own perspective. But their actions are not, of course, always viewed in this light. One of the major protests against women's meanings is on the grounds that they are false and biased. Classified as the 'subjective' (and emotional) knowledge of women and polarized against the 'objective' knowledge of men, there exists in patriarchal order a ready-made format for dismissing feminist meanings. But this assumes that the unequal division of subjectivity/objectivity is 'neutral' and valid ---an assumption which is encouraged within the patriarchal order but one which cannot be accepted by feminists. Piercing through to the essence of this debate, Adrienne Rich (1979) summed it up succinctly when she stated that 'objectivity' is nothing other than male 'subjectivity'. The patriarchal order is the product of male subjectivity and it has been legitimated and made 'unquestionable' by conceptualizing it as 'objectivity'." (Spender, 1980, p.61)

Whereas much of this section of Chapter 5 may seem unrelated to the dissertation, I do not believe it is. If nothing else, this work is a passionate attempt to better understand a vision I hold to be true. The claim of the immigrant experience upon me lies to some large measure in my identification with the oppressed of this world. As I say that, I am embarrassed, knowing how privileged I am by most standards, yet I am also in pain for the song which desires to sing from my mouth and the dance my feet would dance have not been allowed. There has been no place for the essence of me to express myself and that is how I hear the immigrant who says to me, "I am not myself in this language. I do not know who I am anymore." That anguish, I understand in the depth of my soul and it is there that I meet the newcomer.

The dissertation is the culminating project of what has been for me a six-year period of study, research and writing which has been woven into the already busy fabric of raising four children, a move to a new city and career, the loss of my only son and consequent return to Edmonton, and building a business from the ground up. The pages you have been reading are not separate from any of that; both the words spoken and the words unspoken tell in some ways the story of the events of my life and of those responses I have made to them. There have been positive moments and negative ones; there have been small instances of "ah-ha!" and long periods of great struggle as I attempted to reconcile my perceptions of what was required of me to complete the doctorate and my integrity as to what was worth doing. I was surprised by the difficulty I have had in that attempt to reconcile the two.

I was both blessed and cursed, although primarily the former, by the trust of my advisors in allowing me to choose a topic which was truly a quest for me. I say blessed in the sense that if it had not been truly something I sought to understand, I would have given up long ago, if even I had begun. I say cursed in the sense that it is so broad as to present an enormous challenge to comprehend the breadth and depth of my question without becoming totally lost in its many tangled pathways. Many times, I eagerly followed an interesting turn only to decide, reluctantly, to head back to the original direction.

I am going to recount for you the major themes of my reflections as they occurred to me in the final analysis. The first was, not surprisingly, confusion, on many layers. First, as I have mentioned was the confusion made possible by the question itself. To ask a question of meaning is to have as many responses as there are instances of asking in any given context in time and space. How was I to limit my questioning? How was I to select from the volume of response to those questions? It was not easy to limit the asking to questions of power, teaching and language because every question brought more questions. Whereas I am actually quite comfortable with the process of generating questions, as I feel the questions themselves take me deeper and deeper in my understandings, I had no such security that they would be acceptable to someone reading a dissertation. For that reason, although you have seen questions in my writing, these are infinitely fewer than those I came up with. That leads me to the second aspect of my confusion.

What did it mean to write a doctoral dissertation in this department at this time, given that I am me and not someone else? I know what a doctoral dissertation used to be about back in the days of quantitative research in this department. I know what many T.E.S.L. dissertations look like now in other universities. I have read some wonderful dissertations in the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions in our department. However, I have never seen a dissertation which asked a question like mine and used a process remotely like mine. I therefore felt very much in the dark as to what the real parameters of my work were.

People told me that I should write to please myself but I had no sense of permission to do that. First of all, although when I write naturally, I am told that I am a good writer, that writing is perceived as good only in certain contexts, either as plenary addresses which are given orally, or as material written for teachers wanting to understand new ideas. It has not been acceptable to blind reviewers wanting material for fairly conservative professional journals. (I have been published but always in invitational journals or in refereed journals requesting permission to publish the plenaries as such and therefore not subject to review.) Because I perceive the refereed journals as academic writing, as I do the dissertation, I therefore perceive the unacceptability of, what is for me, my natural style of written expression, which tends to sound very much as if it were spoken. Because I have not felt permission to be myself in this process, I feel very much like a sighted person who has been temporarily blinded by being made to walk in a place where I cannot see the obstacles. Rather than say what I sense needs to be said, I tread cautiously, never knowing when I will trip and when I will not and feeling thus very ungraceful in the way I proceed.

Part of the confusion has to do with not knowing who I am writing for. When I do a plenary address, I know the audience. I am part of them and they are part of me. When I speak, I am confident that my words are like brush strokes painting pictures with which they are totally familiar and that once they have seen themselves on the canvas and felt comfortable they will let me lead them anywhere I want to go because they know I understand. There is that trust. But who is the dissertation for, I ask myself. Yes, it is for me in response to my question but it is also for the four teachers who gave me so much of their time and trust to participate. It is also for the E.S.L. teaching profession who, like me, want to better understand what it is that we do. It is for teacher educators who are always looking to understand the world of practice better so that they may more competently prepare teachers for the field. It is for them but the bottom line is that it is for the four or five members of the committee who must decide whether or not my labors are worthy of a doctoral degree. My committee members are knowledgable men and women for whom I have deep respect. Will they see value in my way of searching? Will they even understand what I am saying in that E.S.L. is not their area of specialization? I walk not only as a blind person but also as a child, not in E.S.L. where I feel more like a grandmother, but in academia where so many know so much and I so little. I enter into the forest of academic writing carrying my basket of E.S.L. experiences and I know that the basket is full but will the creatures of the forest want them? Have I wrapped them appealingly or will they be cast aside? Will I meet in the forest wolves waiting to devour me or fairy godmothers willing to deliver me to the other side, back into the light?

Aside from the confusion of trying to carry my basket of treasures through this place of relative darkness, there is also fear, fear at the responsibility of trying to do justice to the learners whose need is so great and to the teachers who are genuinely committed to their cause and fear of the repercussions of telling the truth, albeit my truth, to a readership of conflicting interests, the politics of writing. The administrators were not happy to hear the teachers express their ideas; how will they react to this writing and with what consequences for those teachers still working at Western Canada Community College? The teachers I experienced as very different from one another. I have written about them as I experienced them. How will they receive my writing, with what consequences to the way they feel about themselves, about the research, about me? How will my writing about these things affect the business which I and many others have been working so hard to build in the past four years? Will I be seen as too radical or perhaps as overly idealistic? Will my ideas generate fear or scorn or will they be received as hopeful?

In this forest of darkness, there have been clearings of light where, briefly, I risked my own style of writing which is emotional, detailed, metaphoric and from the heart. The words written in such clearings stand out as signposts of hope for me because there have been many moments when the weight of my words and the confusion of my choices caused me to wonder if I was destroying that which I knew how to do and did well. I feared that I would never again be able to write my truth in my way.

I have also experienced exhaustion at many points along the way, not just physical exhaustion but the mental and emotional exhaustion which prevents one from so much as picking up a pen or reading a word. How I have envied those who are able to put their families on hold, take their sabbatical income and just do the research for one or two years. What a difference that would have made! Alas, that is not a choice for a single parent. It has been stressful to try to balance all the different aspects of my life and more than once, I have asked myself if it were really worth it to write about something when I could be spending more of my time simply doing it instead of theorizing about it. Still, my answer to that question has always been an unequivocal yes! To research and to write is to force myself to reflect and make sense out of what I am doing. It is somewhat of a pattern with me to be very creative in my doing but to feel very limited in my ability to name that which I have created in a way that makes it accessible to anyone else. In that it is empowering transformation I value, I recognize the importance of making my ideas available to others not only so that they may try them out too but so that they can call me to account and critically contribute to the growth of my own ideas and my ability to actualize them.

It has also been stressful to be doing this work in the midst of much other activity in which the language and way of thinking are very different. Every time I would be away from the dissertation, it would take me as much as a day or two of reading and jotting notes to get me back into the level of thinking I needed to be on to continue what I had begun. The flip back and forth between the simple, concrete language of the E.S.L. classroom and the more abstract language of the dissertation is itself stressful although one which I feel academics need to make far more often than they do. Those of us who would teach teachers need to feel comfortable in both worlds and need to be able to use words with which those teachers feel at home. To do otherwise is to alienate them from that which we seek to teach.

There is another aspect in which I worry about the acceptability of my language. I speak of my own inner woundedness as a woman in a world of men. I have no confidence that academia which, as you have seen, I see very much as a patriarchal institution, will accept my words. Once again, I walk in a strange land where I do not speak the language nor understand the systems but in which I must nonetheless set my way of being on hold and try to interpret my experiences in the words of those who own this land. As a woman, I am an immigrant in the land of men and it is from that experience of not knowing that I identify with those who come to Canada from other places of knowing. Even as I say this, I know this will be met with incomprehension by many who would read it and in this area my knowledge is not yet developed enough to articulate my experiences in the university and the struggle those experiences have generated. I know that in the feminist critique much has written about such systemic barriers and I look forward to one day having time to read such writing and integrate it with my own experiences. Right now, I can only describe a couple of my experiences and hope that, from that describing, the reader would have a sense of what it felt like to be so alienated.

One instance was a course which was disappointingly painful. We were forced to engage a process of writing which was antithetical to my own process and, for me, very destructive. The course was based on the assumption that writing got better with each redoing. My style, however, as unconscious as I then was of it, was to let the seed of an idea germinate in the womb of my thoughts for however many days or weeks or months it needed until it itself felt ready to face the harsh light of birth. Then, like the waters breaking, the words came in a rush. They flooded the pages. The product of such writing I found generally to be good with only minor adjustments needed. I would read such writing and be myself impressed, not that I had written it but that it said something which enlightened me and I would wonder where it came from. It was born in all its wholeness from a place I do not remember.

But no, we were told that good writing emerged from a process of planning, telling, reflecting, replanning and telling again. We had but one assignment in that course but we had to do it again and again. I could not follow these directions and have any ownership of the material whatsoever. It was like taking a perfectly formed newborn child as God had made her and redesigning the tiny hands or changing the color of the hair or skin. It felt like sacrilege and I felt as if I were a murderess. The "child" which remained after the fourth or fifth restructuring was no longer beautiful but had become robot-like and I disowned her. I initially trusted myself to that process in spite of strong inclinations to do otherwise because our teacher was and is a truly excellent writer in every sense. His process works for him but it does not work for me.

I have experienced the writing of this dissertation in somewhat of a similar fashion because, except perhaps for these reflections at the end, I have had the sense that if I wrote naturally and wholly, following my own inner processes, that it would be unacceptable to those who have the power to say "yay" or "nay" to my Ph.D. Having the "child" torn from me in that other course and being told to reshape her has left a strong mark upon me and I wonder if I have unconciously ensured that there was much "wrong" with my writing in this work so that there was somewhere to go other than sacrilege when this "child" was torn apart and returned for reworking. I may be quite wrong about that fear but it is born of experience in this domain and it has been a hard fear to ignore or work around.

That was one instance which struck me as patriarchal at source. Another incident left a deep mark but was useful in giving me a personal reference point for what it felt like to be invisible, the ironic experience of many "visible" minorities. A friend and myself had gone to a curriculum conference in the States. There were probably a dozen people from our department there; the rest were all men. I went to a session done by one of our professors about a course which I was then teaching as a graduate assistant. There were six of us there likewise working as instructors in the course. At the conclusion of the presentation, before the discussion began, the presenter introduced the other five instructors, suggesting to the audience that these people might likewise have something to offer the discussion. I sat silently, digesting the ignominy of invisibility and then I called his name with a question mark, hoping he would then add me to his list. He said "Yes, Virginia?" I then, with great embarrassment, said that I too was teaching the course. "Oh," he said with surprise, "Of course you are" and went on. It is very difficult to have a voice in a context in which the ears are not tuned to that frequency. Academia is tuned to the frequency of men, not women. To be heard, women have to adjust their frequencies to those of men, and they do so at great cost, to themselves, and to that community of persons who, for its own wholeness, needs both frequencies if the harmony is to be complete.

One thing I am very glad about in some ways is the length of time it has taken me to work through the data and write this after having done the work with the teachers over four years ago. The intervening time has helped me a great deal in two ways. First, it has allowed to fall away many of the extraneous but tempting distractions which came up in the interactions with the teachers. I could see the path more clearly as time passed. Secondly, there have been many developments and happenings in the field which have shed light on various aspects of my questioning in this time. With the amazing patience of an excellent committee, I have finally come to the end of this particular adventure. I feel very grateful to all who have been present to me in it.

Chapter 6

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Introduction

This particular journey for me is drawing to a close but on it, I have taken many "photos". Some will no doubt disappear into storage as photos are wont to do but it is my hope and my intent that a very small number may be sufficiently well-composed as to stick in my mind and in the minds of a few others who might likewise find them interesting enough to go back to the scene and explore them further.

This study speaks, I believe, to every aspect of E.S.L.: policy and administration, curriculum, teacher recruitment, selection and preparation, evaluation and research, and beyond those things, to the kind of society Canadians wish to build in this vast but relatively empty land of ours.

In the pages which follow, there are many bald statements of "fact" for which I have not cited chapter and verse of some authoritative text. The statements made are based on my own experiences. In some cases, they may appear to have nothing to do with this particular study but, if I thought that were true, they would not have been included. I believe that the only way to understand the small picture, namely this moment in this particular program, is to understand its relationship to the larger picture. In this chapter, I am trying to take several steps backwards to gain the distance to begin to understand what is not understandable when one is situated in the midst of the teacher meanings discussed in this work. Those meanings came from somewhere and exist because the systems in which they work support their continued existence. If we are ever to effect genuine and lasting change, significant change that will make a positive difference in our lives, we must come to understand first how it is that we came to be as we are and what forces exist to keep us in that situation.

To continue this journey into recreating our work as educators of immigrant learners, we must, I believe, be willing to go back again and again to some very basic questions concerning our relationship with those learners and with the society into which and for which we are assisting them to take their places. In this chapter, I return to some of the starting places but hopefully with a new sense of them. I go back in order to see more clearly where I am going when I step forward.

I. The Policies and Administration of T.E.S.L. Programs

For purposes of this chapter, I am defining administration from a broad perspective beginning with the systems which have the power to fund or not fund E.S.L. programs, to decide who the "delivering" agency should be, to determine the length of the program and to select who is entitled to participate therein. The administrative hierarchy ends with those in the "delivery" agencies who exert control over the activities of students and teachers in the classrooms. In this case, there are three seats of authority: the federal government (elected and staffed), the provincial government (elected and staffed) and the institution or agency decision-makers charged with accountability for program "delivery". (I use this word conscious that I do not like the implications of so conceiving what we are doing but mindful also of the fact that this is how it is spoken of in the field.) Because those individuals holding authority within these seats of power influence the shape of that which we call curriculum, all of these people and the structures which support their decisions must stand open to question in any situation where we are questioning curricular intents and outcomes. In this study, I have sought to identify some basic teacher meanings for this program; these meanings do not exist in isolation. They either stand as monuments to the systems which sustain them or as challenges to them. In the case of this study, some of the contradictions we have seen between stated intents and actual outcomes may find their roots in the fact that the various aspects of all the different systems were not and are not in integrity with one another. In some cases, those people in them are not aware of such discrepancies nor of the assumptions which give rise to them.

A good place for the questioning to begin may be with the Canadian citizenry who elect their federal and provincial governments. I see no clear vision amongst Canadians as to what we want our country to be nor of the role we see for the immigrant newcomer. Whereas the official line favors multiculturalism over the American melting pot, there seem to be a broad variety of possibilities as to what that means, with no commonly-held vision as to what it is or could be in practice. As an educator, I have to ask whose responsibility it is to stimulate the creation of a vision and I have to hope that I am not alone in seeing the need for so doing. As an individual Canadian, I have to consciously accept that challenge for myself and try to find others who share my values and my sense of accountability for generating a vision of Canada which holds all of its people to be of great value. There is a hollowness, for me, in the materialistic orientation of this society. I see North America in general as being relatively devoid of human community if one compares it with the kind of communities to be found in the Third World. The fruit of our relative wealth in the world is loneliness and alienation for many of our people. With all the problems faced by those who come here with little or no formal education, job skills irrelevant to this technological society, and languages other than English, I have yet to see the kind of loneliness and alienation I see in the world of my experience in Canada. In their struggle with various oppressive political systems and with poverty, many refugees have found the value of the human spirit while working in cooperation one with the other. They have not overlooked the joy of the moment and the need to celebrate that moment rather than always looking to the future to find that elusive happiness we expect to come with "success" or wealth or security, for example. The values of their experiences are values which I, for one, believe our society needs to find again. We need to be reminded of who are are as human souls. Beyond our technology, our science, our drive for progress and accumulated wealth, beyond all those things, we need to be reminded of who we are without all of that. The refugee who comes here with none of those trappings is capable of so reminding us, if we but care enough to listen.

In one way, I am afraid for the Canadian public to be challenged with so great a responsibility as giving conscious shape to our nation. I am afraid because I see in the reactions of many to progressive policy decisions an increasingly visible racism which runs like a slow-leaking poison through this society. In spite of much evidence to the contrary, such as that written about by the journalist Victor Malarek in his book Havensgate (1987), immigrants are still being blamed for the unemployment crisis in this country while the real sources of this problem remain largely hidden and unsought by most people.

It is the public who elects the government. It is the public which must hold that government accountable for creating policies which serve the interests and values of all who live here. In that much of the decision-making done by the government, however, is done by those hired to design and implement funding programs consistent with the elected government's priorities, one question which necessarily arises in relation to E.S.L. is why, within a federal bureacracy which spends millions on E.S.L. programs, there is not one person with E.S.L. expertise. Their answer to that question is that because of federal-provincial funding agreements and the provincial mandate over education, it is the province's role, not the federal one, to ensure accountability for dollars spent. I cannot accept this answer, however, when I hear the openly-stated dissatisfaction of the federal bureacracy with the results of their expenditures. Such "buck-passing" would not be tolerated in the private sector. Why is it tolerated in the public one? I think the answer to that question lies somewhere in the realm of the real reasons for funding E.S.L. as opposed to the stated reasons for doing so. Do we really care, as a nation, whether such programs do what they are supposed to do?

It is the federal bureaucracy working within the context of each province which decides how long each course for the immigrant newcomer is to be. (In Alberta, it is twenty weeks.) Lower down in the hierarchy, it is the individual counsellor at C.E.C. who decides who is to be given a course and who is not. If I, as an educator, have come to know, as the S.N. teachers have, that twenty weeks is not enough for these particular learners, is it or is it not my responsibility to ensure that those who make such decisions also know that? If the administrators in whatever program I teach do not see for me or for themselves the responsibility to express that voice, what other alternatives can I find? Personally, I challenge the commonly held stance that an E.S.L. teacher should not be an advocate for those she or he teaches. I challenge it on two counts, one being that such learners cannot, without the language and cultural information necessary, advocate on their own behalf and, secondly, that the E.S.L. teacher is usually closer to that learner during that twenty weeks than any other Canadian and is therefore in the best position during that time both to know and to understand the inequities of that one's experience and to be trusted by that one to speak on her or his behalf.

The teacher meanings revealed in this study as to what the teachers understood teaching to be about seldom included advocacy and political work as part of the role of the teacher. Yet the program in which they teach is built on values which will never be realized without attention to the larger systems in which the program must function. As educators, we have to continue to search for and try to understand the larger context of our work and to find ways of expanding our meanings so as to create structures more in keeping with what we are trying to do. Either that, or we are living an illusion in thinking that what we do do can make a real and lasting difference to either the learners or to the society we share with them.

As for the actual administrators of E.S.L. programs, this study showed a good example of the problems which can arise when one or more of the persons making decisions which affect E.S.L. programs do not have the experiences or understandings which would enable them to base those decisions on the lives of those effected by them. Whereas the department head was himself an experienced E.S.L. teacher, he had been stripped of much of his authority by a new administration which valued, among other things, uniformity across different programs in the institution and did not appreciate the cost of that policy to the needs of this particular group of learners. The decisions of these men indicated that they perceived T.E.S.L. as a purely technical skill and made it very difficult for the teachers to implement a curriculum based on different values and assumptions. As teachers, we have to explore ways of communicating with decision-makers which not only heighten their awareness as to the reality in which we work but which do so in a way that is as non-threatening as possible. This is difficult to do when we feel already overextended and are furthermore afraid of losing our jobs in a situation where job insecurity is the biggest issue for the teachers. As individuals, we can do relatively little but if we were willing to find the time to organize ourselves, it is possible, I believe, to change this situation.

II. Curriculum Theory and Practice in T.E.S.L.

The biggest problem I can see with E.S.[illegible] at this time appears to be the way it is conceptualized. E.S.L. teachers in fact do a lot more than teach English. They orient people to the community and the resources available to them and their families. But because E.S.L. has traditionally been seen as an offshoot of applied linguistics, our curriculum plans, our teacher training programs, and our evaluation procedures put more emphasis on the linguistic aspects of language than they do upon such settlement issues as participation in Canadian society and on cultural knowledge. Language is unquestionably an essential example of cultural capital although by no means the only example and the way in which language is learned, when indeed it is learned at all, may make a big difference as to whether one really experiences Voice in this society. We need to explore what it would mean to call our work "settlement education" or "education for participation in Canadian society" rather than "E.S.L. training".

To base an E.S.L. program on the assumptions that learners can and should have a say in what and how they learn and that the teacher is also a learner is unusual in the field as a whole. Whereas most programs would agree with these ideas in theory, one would not observe an attempt to put them into practice except in isolated moments. The S.N. teachers were, for the most part, trying to put this principle into practice. They were also valuing the learners for the wealth of their experiences and the personal traits which enabled them to survive the more traumatic of those experiences. These teachers together form one small of group of Canadians who can begin to see what Canadians could learn from our immigrant newcomers and to appreciate the possibilities such learnings could open up for our society were they available to large numbers of people.

If we take the real ground of the teaching situation to be the experiences of all participants, then we have to look at the S.N. program very closely to see what its participants are really learning there and to what degree that learning serves their interests in Canadian society. In terms of quantity, the S.N. learners do not, in the experience of those who teach them, have enough English language skills, in most cases, to get along in the situations where they will require English. Knowing that, what justification is there to continue placing the drop in the bucket when such drops tend to evaporate leaving very little residue? Are we really appeasing our collective consciences and blaming the learners for "failing" to get what they need out of what they are given?

Our curriculum plan includes the intents, the resources, the activities and the evaluative systems we wish to have in place for our learning program. What was apparent in this study was the fact that our planning seldom takes into account the values, the assumptions, the beliefs and the experiences upon which we make decisions about those four elements. When those elements were questioned, confusion and uncertainty were the result. The questions seemed foreign and were threatening because, in asking them, was the implicit assumption that they should be familiar, that we should have answers to them and yet, too often, we do not. As educators, we are so busy doing that we seem not to take the time to reflect upon the meaning and value of what we are doing. The teachers in this study at once valued the opportunity to do so but at the same time were seriously stressed by the addition of such a time-consuming activity to their already hectic lives. What could we sacrifice in terms of activity in order to give ourselves more time to understand what we are doing and be more intentional and critical of how we go about that?

Another curricular consideration we might well think about is the kind of language we "teach" in the classroom. In communicative competence curricula, we try to simulate "real" communicative situations outside the classroom by bringing in "typical" dialogues which the learners practice, the assumption being that if they can say the words in class, they can say them when presented with the same situation outside the classroom. In my experience, that method is only effective with learners already conditioned to it. The learners in the S.N. program learned words when they had something to say to the teacher or to someone else. The words they reached for, they learned because they were real, relevant and meaningful at that moment. Are there not enough possibilities for real communication that we can stop pretending and genuinely talk to each other?

III. Teacher Preparation, Selection, and Recruitment

The struggle for me in the various roles I play in relation to the non-teaching aspects of my work as an E.S.L. teacher concerns my belief that it is less what the teacher does than who she is which determines the degree to which she is able to teach successfully in participatory approaches to curriculum.

The distinction between education and training as instructional approaches seems to be a very relevant one in determining how one prepares, selects and recruits teachers to particular programs. In training, there is a preset package which one delivers unto the waiting learners. Assuming one is not an outright racist, the teacher's values, while important, are less important in a training program because there is less room there for the teacher's individual style, personality, and values to significantly influence the direction and outcomes of the curriculum and the lives of those at its center. Both the teacher and the learner in a training program are schooled to fit into clearly defined roles: the teacher is the expert while the learner is the bowl waiting to be filled. In a participatory program, the situation of both teacher and learner is very different. Both are expected to share their expertise and experiences for the benefit of all.

In both training and educational situations, the learners come into a program prepared to give authority to the teacher because that is the way it has always been in most people's experience. In a participatory curriculum, the teacher facilitates the learners in exercising their freedom of participation. She must provide the language tools to ask questions, make choices, agree and disagree. She must stand back and see her well-developed plans be cast aside in favor of the spontaneous decision of the group as a whole to pursue an unexpected direction. If a teacher is accustomed to deriving a sense of purpose and satisfaction from the exercise of power over others, and is unaware of the dynamics of that pattern, it is next to impossible to choose an educational approach in which that no longer happens. I personally continue to experience this as possibly the biggest barrier to my own abilities to do this work as well as I would like. I have no problem sharing power as long as those who share it with me are making decisions consistent with my values and ways of seeing and being in the world. I do not even have a problem with those values and ways being questioned. I do have a difficult time, however, if the group suddenly moves in ways which contradict my values which is exactly the risk one takes in doing this kind of educational work. It is so easy to take over when things do not go the way I want them to go. In this research, I saw the other teachers wrestling with this contradiction too. Perhaps the most honest approach we can take is to ask ourselves to what degree we can be participatory educators in the face of systems where power is still hierarchical and as teachers we have a position on that hierarchy where we have to account to someone higher up in it than we are.

It also means that in preparing teachers and in selecting and recruiting them, we have to address questions of being and values rather than just techniques and resources. I may think I am not a racist but if I have grown up in a community where Brazil nuts were called "nigger toes", Christmas oranges were called "Jap. oranges", and we made difficult decisions by saying "eenie meenie my-nee mo, catch a nigger by the toe....", how do we know what residue that has left in our souls? I cringe now even to write these words. They cause me pain but when they were first drawn to my attention, I was merely startled and horrified. Now, I am in pain and my horror has to do not with what I am aware of but with what I am not. We are all victims of our own upbringing. How can the universities work with teachers to increase their awareness as to the hidden curricula of our childhood and of our lives as victims of the mass media, and how can they work to heal the wounds left by such experiences? How can we as teachers work with one another and with the learners to the same end?

I believe we have also to question our understanding of what qualifications are most meaningful in the E.S.L. field. As an administrator, I hire many different people to work in various E.S.L. programs. I recently created some upset for some people by hiring a colleague with non-traditional qualifications. She does not have a B.Ed. and had never taught in a classroom setting. Her qualifications include a highly-developed critical awareness of the global situation: politically, philosophically, and economically. She is an intuitive, creative and energetic person with a chameleon-like ability to get along well in any situation with any person. She is, in addition, a refugee with eighteen years in Canada. In order, partly, that she could learn some of the technical aspects of E.S.L., we taught one course together this year. The result was that I learned at least as much from her as she did from me and the students found us to be an incredible combination, or so we are told. I was only able to hire this extraordinary woman because I work in private enterprise. Had I been administering a government program, I would have had to accept whoever had the acceptable paper credentials. If we are willing to reconceptualize E.S.L. and the way it is taught, we must also question what it is that best prepares someone to work with these learners. Because my colleague is a critically-conscious immigrant and has herself lived through situations very similar to those of many of the learners, she can understand their feelings and needs much better than I ever could because no matter how much I learn as an E.S.L. teacher, I can never be an immigrant in Canada. Her English language skills are well-developed. She still makes occasional errors in grammar and has trouble with spelling, although that is improving with practice. Her pronunciation is moderately accented with the patterns of her own language. Normally, those would be obstacles to being hired as an E.S.L. teacher. I am very glad, however, that I did not let them be obstacles to me. Her presence has made participatory education more of a reality than I could have made it alone because she can see my contradictions and blindspots. We have found ways of compensating for her deficits. I could never compensate for what she brings were she to leave. Is it time to consider cultivating a critically conscious group of immigrants with good language skills and a natural teaching ability to work with Canadian teachers in our E.S.L. programs? Not only would the students benefit from their presence but it would potentially present a great opportunity for the Canadian teachers to enrich our consciousness of the global situations from which the learners come.

Another aspect to consider in teacher preparation programs would be to question the nature of language as it relates to our teaching and our preparation of teachers. As a T.E.S.L. professor at the University of Manitoba, one of my course assignments was to teach a course in applied linguistics. This included error and discourse analysis, phonemic transcription and different approaches to syntax, all of which I have found to be useful in my own teaching. What were not on previous curricula, however, were the philosophical understandings of language and culture and of the connection between language and human relationships. In this research project, we saw in the teachers' stories many, many examples of learning arising out of moments of relationship between the teacher and the student or between students. Language was generated because individuals wanted so much to communicate with one another. Understandings came about with the most minimum number of words. The energy was in wanting to relate. Language, as the medium of that relationship, rose to the challenge. How can we teach teachers more deeply to understand their own experiences in language and to see language teaching as more than application of theory? What would it mean to LIVE our teaching rather than to DO it?

As an E.S.L. teacher, I have often felt my ignorance of certain fields of knowledge and wished I could have studied more about world history, about various political and economic systems, about various languages, and about different cultural values. Why is it, I have wondered, that when these fields of knowledge seem so obviously necessary to do this work well, they are not mandatory parts of a T.E.S.L. curriculum? If the only language a teacher knows is English, how can she help the learners to bridge the conceptual gaps between their own languages and this one? She can hardly begin to understand that such gaps are even there if she speaks only one language. Likewise, if we are unaware of the cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs of our students, how do we know what they need to learn to avoid exploitation and humiliation in this culture? Whereas I think it would be unrealistic to expect any teacher or teacher education program to ensure basic knowledge about every language and culture which enters our classrooms, it would not be unreasonable to expect every teacher to have worked to master the basics of one other language and culture quite different from English. (The European languages are not ideal because of their structural and conceptual similarities to English but languages such as Arabic, Punjabi, an Oriental language or a native Indian or African language would be ideal in that they conceive of the world so differently than we do.) Such language experience could serve as a prerequisite to T.E.S.L. studies such that reflection upon those experiences would be part of the program of studies itself.

As I read and reread the teachers' notes and my summaries and selections from them, one theme became quite striking. I refer to the theme of struggle. Again and again, we saw the E.S.L. learners in the teachers' entries struggling with making sense of their new world and of the worlds they left. Simultaneously, we saw the teachers struggling to know how to respond to their struggles in a helpful manner. In struggle, there is energy. If teaching is experienced often as struggle, is there a way of channelling that energy into directed movement rather than letting it create fatigue and confusion for those who experience themselves as buffeted by those struggles? The concerns of the teachers in this research were not different from the concerns I have heard from E.S.L. teachers everywhere: job insecurity, programs too short to do what is needed, too little information and clarity about what we are supposed to be doing, unsupportive administrators and funding agents, no support systems in place for the wider non-educational needs of newcomers. Considering all the energy we lose surviving in the midst of these problems year after year, have we considered what would be necessary to organize ourselves and tackle these issues at their source rather than just complain about them and wait for someone else to solve the problems? Are we participating in making our lives better in the same way that we want our students to participate in creating better lives for themselves?

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Writing up the results of this research and my interpretations of it all has been enlightening and stressful to me at the same time, mostly because I am constantly called to question myself, not as I was, but as I am. The moment of this research may be past but the voice I express to myself in it is very much present. I cannot blithely draw conclusions about "the teachers" because all of the questioning done in this project bears directly on what I am doing right now and I experience the responsibility of seeing as enormous. I have seen some things I do not want to see because in seeing the complexity, the task becomes overwhelming and I want at times to run away from it all, or to retreat back into the idealism in which I did not fully understand why things were not changing for the better. There is still much I do not understand but because I understand more completely than I did before, it means the work of effecting positive change becomes all the more difficult. There are battles to fight where I did not even perceive there was an enemy; some of those battles are within myself insofar as I cannot yet see and understand what it is that has made me me, or, on a grander scale, that has created the obstacles to change within the systems in which I live and work.

There is also, I am embarrassed to say, a value in being confused. A radical-in-theory is no threat to anyone as long as he or she appears sufficiently confused as to be incapable of seeing through the system sufficiently to be able to change it. In order to write one's ideas, one has to overcome the confusion, at least to some degree. Gradually, things begin to fall into place and a slightly clearer picture emerges. There have been many moments of that happening in this writing which I have experienced as dangerous. To speak clearly and boldly to those who would threaten the baby-like development of new ideas is to raise the degree to which the status quo might sense the threat to itself and it also provides those who would put such ideas to rest with ammunition for that cause.

I am unsure as to what value others may place on this research as I have written about it. I know that the process of doing it has been valuable to me and that the teachers also experienced value in the process. I know my constant questions have been a source of irritation and confusion to others but for me, "re-search" means questioning and questioning again. I began with one question which, like a rabbit, rapidly proliferated into several more. I arrive at the end of my process having discovered more questions than I had to begin with. For me, that is valuable. Sometimes, the hard part is in articulating the question. When I know nothing, I do not know even what questions to ask or where to begin. When I know more, I can ask a question and that question becomes a starting point to proceed into my explanations of some unknown. If I may make one conclusion as a result of this research, it is that we know very little about a work that carries great social responsibilities. Maybe, at this point, it is enough to recognize what we do not know and, maybe, it is okay to frustrate ourselves with the sheer unrelenting volume of our questions such that we may, as a group of caring educators, gather unto ourselves the will and the energy to pursue answers to our questions. This we may do through collaborative research on our own programs with one another and, possibly, with the learners too. This we may also do through creative approaches to programming, through challenging all we have known and daring to try something different. Most of all, in searching for our own answers, I hope we will not forget that those we teach are the ones who have the greatest capacity to answer our questions. It is up to us to ask them and to learn to listen to what they tell us.

FOOTNOTES

1. Krashen calls acquisition the natural, unconscious process of learning a language which a child experiences in coming to the mother tongue and calls learning the conscious process that results in knowing about language. In reference to learning, he hypothesizes that a monitor or editor comes into play to make changes in the form of our utterance after it has been produced by the acquired system. (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 24)

2. The term "languaging" is used occasionally in this writing. That has been protested by some who argue that language is a noun and that the term "communicating" would stand equally well in the place of "languaging". Although this did not feel right to me, I took the advice and sought to make the necessary changes. After a painstaking search, at that point I found I had used the term twice, once in the place of adjective and once as a gerund in the place of object. Although it would be infinitely easier to change the words than to justify their usage, I feel the need to do the latter, if for no other reason than to challenge the narrow boundaries traditionally ascribed to both of the words "language" and "communication".

"-ing" forms of nouns put us into the essence of the life of the concept in a way that using them as objects or subjects of another verb cannot. For example, take the noun "hug". The experience of "hugging" is clearly broader than either giving a hug or getting one; it takes both into account with no effort to separate out who is donor and who benefactor, a separation which surely does an injustice to the concept. It strikes me as similarly inappropriate to bound "language" to the status of thing when it is such a dynamic, interactive process. Our attention ought to be on the experiencing of language rather than the "thingness" thereof.

"Languaging" activities, therefore, are activities which thrust us into the real heart of language. Within such activities, the language is real; we are IN it. "Communicative activities" seem flat by comparison as, throughout current E.S.L. theory, we are commended to do communicative activities which merely have our students play with words which are not theirs but those of text authors and teachers. I need this word to distinguish between "real" language and "classroom" language in action.

In the second instance of usage, my detractors would have me use the word "communication" in its place. ("In the notion of freewheeling, we find the liveliness of real languaging, of language as process, rather than the static nature of language as thing.") This is not the same thing. I can communicate with someone, if both of us are sufficiently intent upon doing so, without speaking her or his language or she or he speaking mine. I need a word which distinguishes between the kind of communication one makes do with through gesture, tone and experiments with possibly common language roots, and the kind of communication one has in the midst of words and structures which are mutually shared within the experience of one language and culture.

3. Conceptually, education and training are very different concepts but politically, in E.S.L., it is impractical to say what one means because education is a provincial responsibility and training is seen as a federal one connected with employment. In that

full-time E.S.L. programs such as this one are funded by the federal government, one is obliged to call it a training program whether it is or not.

The Special Needs program was designed as an educational program in that the curriculum plan, which is made around the anticipated needs of a group of learners, is intended to be supremely flexible in responding to the lived needs, abilities, talents, aspirations and feelings, among other things, of those participants as they emerge in the course of the program. Training refers to a program with fixed goals and objectives in which a learner succeeds or fails according to his or her measurable achievement of these objectives.

4. In those infrequent situations where inclusive language becomes overly awkward, I have chosen to use the feminine pronoun in reference to E.S.L. teachers because women are by far in the majority in this profession.

5. Over four years after I worked on the research at the W.C.C.C., I went for lunch with John, the department head, and we were recollecting those days. Both of us found that the other seemed to have changed a lot and I felt like were were no longer antagonists but allies in some ways so I dared to ask him if he still saw "bonding" as important in the classroom. He laughed, made a face, and said, "Oh, I HATE that word!" Having reached our destination and the end of our lunch meeting, I neglected to find out why....

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